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# Can Deliberation Alter Patterns of Influence? A Study on Local Government Decision-making and the Deliberative Dialogue Process

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CAN DELIBERATION ALTER PATTERNS OF INFLUENCE? A STUDY ON  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT DECISION-MAKING AND THE DELIBERATIVE  
DIALOGUE PROCESS

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A Dissertation  
Presented to  
the Graduate School of  
Clemson University

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Policy Studies

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by  
William Emery Molnar III  
August 2010

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Accepted by:  
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## ABSTRACT

This study surveyed South Carolina county council elected officials and citizens to examine the local government decision-making process, as it relates to influence and power in the growth and development arena. At its center were both the Kettering Foundation's deliberative dialogue forum model and their assertion that citizens want, and need, to be infused into the process. The study has three significant findings. First, forums did not alter citizen perceptions on who holds power and influence within the local government power structure. Second, decision-makers did not alter on which groups influence them as the type of issue moves from routine to important. Third, the degree of influence by citizens, on elected officials, did not change as an issue moved from routine to important. In fact, the cross-tabulation suggested a negative correlation where citizen influence decreased as an issue became important.

The policy implications of the study were three-fold. First, the model's ineffectiveness raised questions on the future use of forums to effectively assist communities to overcome both the mistrust between citizens and elected officials, and to promote citizen influence in the process. Second, the study found no research to support the position that people want to be fully involved in the public policy process. This called into question the tenet that citizen involvement, through deliberation, will move the process from one based on 'elite favoritism,' back to one that relies upon citizens to promote the public welfare. Third, the study found no statistical evidence to support the assertion of many Kettering associates that decision-makers will turn to the citizenry in

deciding important or ‘wicked’ decisions. The results of this study raise significant policy questions that should lead the Foundation to reexamine its goals and tactics if they wish to achieve their stated goal of “making democracy work as it should.”

## DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my parents, William and the late Marilyn Molnar, who instilled in me the thirst for knowledge and reading, and the belief in education. In addition, I dedicate this study to the ‘average’ middle-class family who, in the last decade, bore the economic brunt of poor public policy decisions made by elected officials who are supposed to represent their interests in our representative democracy.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I first would like to thank Dr. Bob Becker for guiding me throughout Clemson University's doctoral Policy Studies program. Without his advice and friendship this study would not have been possible. I would also like to thank the other members of my committee who guided me through the program and this study – Dr. Holley Ulbrich, Dr. Terry Farris, and Dr. Paul 'Mac' Horton. Dr. Horton initially suggested that I pursue a doctoral degree when I worked for the university and supported me every step of the way. I wish to acknowledge the following individuals and groups who helped me along my journey in the development of this study: Dr. David Hughes for his input and feedback of the survey data; Dr. Alice Diebel, of the Kettering Foundation, who assisted in the development of the list of potential influencers and supplied additional Kettering reports and documents; Dr. Dennis Lambries for his assistance in developing the survey questions; Ms. Barbara Brown who introduced the process of deliberation to me in 2003; and Dr. Denise Finneran for reviewing the study draft.

There are a number of organizations that I wish to thank for their assistance with this study. First, I wish to thank Clemson University and the Institute for Economic and Community Development for the freedom and flexibility to pursue this avenue of research and to develop the Laboratory for Deliberative Dialogue. Second, I thank the Kettering Foundation for providing financial support, a forum that attempts to alter the way decisions are made, and its years of hospitality. Third, I wish to acknowledge the past and current members of the Laboratory for Deliberative Dialogue who gave their time and expertise to try to infuse the process of deliberation into the state's

consciousness. The Laboratory was the vehicle through which deliberative ideas were tested. Finally, I wish to thank Dorchester and Kershaw counties' councils, administrators and citizens for inviting us into their communities and participating in the deliberative dialogue process. Their openness and desire to explore a different method of public involvement was invaluable to this study.

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## PREFACE

In 2003 I was introduced to the deliberative dialogue process and the Charles F. Kettering Foundation by a co-worker and later my co-director at the Laboratory for Deliberative Dialogue at Clemson University. My job at the time was as the assistant director for community development with the newly created Institute for Economic and Community Development and I was seeking for new tools to enhance the work of the Institute and the community development extension agents working across the state. I saw the deliberation process and the issue framing booklets provided by the Kettering subsidiary, the National Issues Forums Institute, as a non-partisan and non-threatening tool to bring people together to discuss difficult issues; as a mechanism to get community development extension agents known by and involved in their communities; and, possibly as a tool for community members to use to work through a problem and find a common solution.

In 2004 I applied for and received funding to develop the Laboratory for Deliberative Dialogue from another Foundation subsidiary, the Council on Public Policy Education. I received grants over three years to help establish the Laboratory. During this time I brought in board members from other state universities and took over the annual moderator training program of Kettering and the Council called a Public Policy Institute. Previous training sessions were poorly publicized and organized resulting in very low levels of participation. Beginning in 2004 I increase participation ten-fold, but immediately became troubled by the lack of measurable moderator training outcomes. The increased participation was welcome, but once training programs were developed

and new moderators acquired deliberation skills, I was left with the “so what” question; do community forums increase public influence in the local decision-making process?

I offered free training for those who agreed to conduct a forum in their community but was unable to successfully follow up on who actually conducted a forum. This led to a bigger question for me: what was the impact of a forum on community development and public policy within the community? This unresolved question was central to my actions and research on the subject over the next six years. In addition, it was a continuous point of contention between me and my co-director. I saw the deliberation process as a tool to get communities to come together to discuss difficult topics, enhancing understanding and possibly finding common ground to move a solution forward. My co-director believed that we should use the process to pull together powerless citizens within a community and provide a focus for community action. These citizens would then organize themselves and become a power block on the issue, thus building grassroots democracy.

Soon after signing the contract with the Council, I was invited to attend Kettering Foundation events at their headquarters in Dayton, Ohio. From 2004 to 2008, I made a number of trips to Dayton as a guest of the Foundation. It was through these workshops that I learned more about the Kettering philosophy and the primary question that they, as a foundation [place on their website ([kettering.org](http://kettering.org)) and on their main brochure] seek to answer – “what does it take to make democracy work as it should?” I learned that the Foundation wanted to give citizens more of a voice in the democratic process and believed that forums were the tool to make that happen. The more I learned, however,

the more unresolved questions I had about the concept and effectiveness of the process. Their research reports were all qualitative and never examined central tenets of the Kettering philosophy; in fact, questioning these tenets was tantamount to heresy.

In 2007 I attended a research workshop at which an inverted pyramid titled The Gap between Citizens and Formal Organizations was presented (Appendix A). The workshop addressed three problems that “stand in the way of citizens acting together to meet the dangers that threaten their collective well-being” (Workshop Handout, 2/26/2007). The pyramid represents “The Gap” between citizens and civic organizations, and formal civic organizations and governments. In this and other workshops, I questioned the level of citizen participation in a representative democracy, whether citizens truly wished to be fully involved, and how forums could connect or reconnect the two parts of the triangle but never received a direct answer. There was neither conceptual debate nor quantitative data to address these concerns or the success of forums to build communities. I became very skeptical of the Foundation and the deliberation process.

I continued to think about the Gap Pyramid and wondered how the divide could be bridged. My co-director (and as I learned, other practitioners) had a strong aversion to including local decision-makers in the forums, saying that their presence would stifle citizen expression and comments. I understood their reluctance, but could not see how to bridge the gap without local decision-makers in the rooms. I reviewed the Kettering literature and found qualitative research done with elected officials but it never addressed elected official attendance at a forum as a method to bridge the divide. In my work, I

never saw Kettering Foundation staff or practitioners question central tenets or the effectiveness of the deliberative process.

In January 2006, I conducted a deliberative dialogue forum on growth and development issues at the behest of the Dorchester County Council. The purpose of the forum was to assist a fast growing suburb of Charleston to address growth issues in a structured format. Six of the seven council members attended the forum and conscientiously made the decision to listen to the comments and concerns expressed (see Appendix G). Later that year, the Kettering Foundation requested research proposals to address one of two questions. I received a \$10,000 grant to study the question of “what is the nature of the relationship between deliberative forums and community politics?”

I used a two-pronged methodology to address their question. First, I conducted three growth and development forums in Kershaw County, South Carolina. The second method was an Influence-Reputational Study, in which I inserted two questions into the bi-annual 2007 South Carolina Local Elected Officials Survey (see Appendix H). The results from these questions form one basis of this research and address hypotheses 1-5 (pp. 15-16). The research report (Can Deliberative Forums Influence Community Politics? A Growth and Development Case Study) was presented to the Kettering Foundation March 2008 (see Appendix H). In 2008 I commissioned another survey question. This multi-part question was part of the 2008 South Carolina State Survey that questioned citizens (see Appendix I). The quantitative data derived from this survey was designed to enhance my understanding of citizen perceptions on who has the reputation of power and is used to test the effectiveness of forums (hypotheses 6 & 7) (p. 16-17).



These different surveys provided sufficient quantitative data to research and analyze my longstanding interest on who influences decision-makers on local growth and development issues and whether it is possible to change the decision-making process to allow more citizen input through the deliberative forum process. This study first sought to understand if elites (represented by members of the growth machine) have greater influence on growth and development decisions than citizens and citizen organizations, especially on important issues. Second, the study asked if deliberative dialogue forums (as promoted by the Kettering Foundation) could successfully alter perceived elite influence to citizen influence, giving citizens increased influence in the public policy-making process.

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Who possesses greater influence over local elected officials on growth and development decisions, elite pro-growth influencers or citizens and citizen groups? Is it possible to change the local decision-making process to allow more citizen input? The purpose of this research was two-fold. The first purpose was to examine the patterns of influence upon local elected officials in their decision-making. This study sought to determine whether different interest groups and/or the level of issue importance influenced local elected officials in different ways. Furthermore, a main goal was to examine empirically whether one group or multiple groups dominated the local power structure on growth and development issues. To reach this goal we must understand the power and influence of various political, professional, pro-growth or “growth machine” elites, and citizen groups and individuals have in the local power structure. Growth machine elites are characterized by the influence they have in a power structure and the potential benefits they may receive from government decisions. Members of the growth machine include developers, realtors, banks, the local chamber of commerce, and other organizations that support aggregate growth in a community.

The second purpose of this study was to examine whether the process of deliberative dialogue forums were an effective tool to change the local decision-making process. If the local decision-making process was significantly influenced by the growth machine could the deliberative dialogue process allow for more citizen input and influence?

A significant body of literature has been devoted to the study of influence within the governmental decision-making process (see Banfield 1965; Dahl 1961; Hunter 1953; Mills 1956; & Putnam 1976). However, few studies have conducted local reputational method research that

examined the array of possible influencers, differentiated between levels of issue importance, and surveys both elected officials and the general public. Hill and Durand (1988) limited possible influencers to land based elites, governmental elites and absentee private sector elites and Reese and Rosenfeld (2002) offer either local government officials or local business leaders. Neither study included citizens, citizen groups or differentiated between the types of decisions made. Past research ranged from how influence is concentrated within special interest groups to how public deliberation provides citizens and citizen groups' greater influence in the policy process. Unfortunately, holistic empirical data at both ends of the spectrum has been limited.

Elected and non-elected decision-makers who decide public policy are influenced by different groups or sectors of our society. Each group is perceived to have different levels of influence upon decision-makers and the policy decisions they make. Policy arenas can be based upon numerous factors including ideological or social factors but the most common unit is geographical. International, national, regional, state and local geographic arenas each have their own power structures that attempt to influence decision-makers and policy decisions. The most prevalent of these in the United States is the local government geographical arena (counties, municipalities and wards).

### The Problem

Who holds greater sway over local decision-makers; the individual citizen and citizen groups, or developers and the Chamber of Commerce? Is it possible to change the decision-making process to allow for more citizen input into the policy process? Are deliberative forums an effective method to change the process? The debate between pluralists arguing for 'what

should be' and elitists arguing for 'what is' has captured the interest of scholars and the general public alike. Theoretically, within our representative democracy individual citizens and citizen groups are supposed to influence decision-makers and thus public policy. However this notion is widely challenged by those who believe that small groups of elites have greater impact on decision-makers and the public policy process. This belief is especially pronounced at the U.S. local government level because as Logan and Molotch state "local officials have extensive authority and fiscal responsibility for land use, revenues and levels of services... The tools of place manipulation are within reach (or at least appear to be), and this motivates individuals at the local level, particularly by influencing local government" (Logan & Molotch, 1987, p.3).

At the other end of the spectrum are pluralist thinkers who believe that citizens and citizen groups have (or should have) substantial influence in the public policy decision-making process. "Starting from the pluralist premise... their worry is that access to power will be closed off, since they begin with an open system" and are committed to sustaining it (Kornhauser 1959, p. 361). The Charles F. Kettering Foundation is a strong proponent for citizen involvement in the decision-making process. The Kettering Foundation believes that citizens have been pushed out of the governing process, that there is a role for citizens in the governing process, and that citizen input is essential to answer the Foundation's central question (found on their website and overview brochure) "what does it take to make democracy work as it should?" Much of the research from the Foundation centers on the need for citizen input and involvement in what the Foundation and many of its researchers consider important or 'wicked' decisions. The term 'wicked' was coined by Fischer (1993) and others to describe problems where the definition is unclear and there are only temporary or imperfect resolutions.

### Citizen Mistrust

Robert Putnam (1999) noted a “30-year erosion of faith in democratic institutions” as well as citizen mistrust in other institutions and in their fellow man (p. 137). After discussing many potential reasons for this erosion, Putnam provided a solution to this loss of trust. His solution was to create new institutions, because democracy works best when there is civic engagement (p. 155).

Charles F. Kettering Foundation research associates such as Yankelovich (1991), Fredrickson (1999) and Freeman (2002) describe a great deal of citizen mistrust in our political and public policy arenas. They argue that what people really want is to be fully involved in the local power structure and this makes for a better democracy. From their research and through community observation, it appears that citizens feel that they have little or no influence over local officials, and that developers hold significant influence over elected officials on growth and development issues.

Foundation researchers and practitioners hold to a conventional wisdom that citizens want full involvement in the policy process and that in order for democracy to work “as it should” citizens need to use a deliberative process to communicate with and influence policymakers. Through deliberation, Kettering is seeking a paradigm shift from a political system that they characterize as “elite favoritism” to a more pluralistic system where citizens are heard and have an impact on policy in our representative democracy. The Foundation especially believes that citizen input is essential on significant or as what they call “wicked” problems (Kettering, 2006). Unfortunately, Kettering provides neither empirical evidence to support their theory that most citizens want to be consistently involved in the political arena, nor have they

successfully demonstrated that the process of deliberative dialogue is an effective mechanism to enhance citizen participation and affect public policy. One Kettering associate wrote that “deliberative theory holds out the hope that another kind of politics might supplant the usual partisan, interest-driven, money-fed, public-ignoring kind of politics that dominated the twentieth century. At present, the most innovative and robust political forces seem to be deliberative forums... but even after 25 years, these public deliberations are barely discernable features of our political landscape (McAfee, 2006, pp. 61-62).” She concludes that “...no amount of public deliberation will make a damned bit of difference to how politics-as-usual runs (p. 63).”

#### Demonstrated Mistrust

Much of Kettering’s literature details the lack of trust in governmental organizations and the media. They note that ordinary citizens believe that they have little power or influence to affect policy outcomes. Kettering suggests that a process known as deliberative dialogue will enable citizens to come together to rationally discuss contentious issues and connect policymakers to the people. Thus, policy decisions will reflect the interests of the citizens and enhance democracy. The Foundation states that it is only by hearing the people that democracy’s promise is fulfilled and the deliberative dialogue process will move policymakers to look to citizens for advice on policy matters, thus changing the current decision-making process.

Deliberative dialogue is a process whereby individuals in a community are invited to come together to thoughtfully discuss all aspects of a specific issue. The intent of the dialogue is to provide a gauge on the public’s viewpoint regarding common problems and issues.

Deliberative dialogue forums are structured conversations of various lengths and formats that use discussion guides to lay out a range of possible approaches to an issue. The Foundation states that deliberation is a process in which community residents share in the democratic process and build public knowledge. Many forums use booklets created by the National Issues Forum Institute (NIFI), a subsidiary of the Kettering Foundation (One such booklet is titled *A Nice Place to Live: Creating Communities, Fighting Sprawl*.)

The Kettering booklet *A Nice Place to Live* was used by the Clemson Laboratory for Deliberative Dialogue as the basis for growth and development deliberative forums in Dorchester County, South Carolina (January 31, 2006) and for a series of forums conducted in Kershaw County, South Carolina (November 8, 12 & 15, 2007).

Each forum discussed three approaches to growth and development (1) Fulfill the Suburban American Dream, (2) Strengthen Cities, Stop Sprawl at its Source, and (3) Free Americans to Choose Lifestyles. The comments elicited ran the gamut of ideas and values including a significant mistrust of local elected officials (particularly in fast growing Dorchester County) as they make growth and development policy decisions. Some of the comments and concerns about who influences/controls growth included:

- Going to council meetings doesn't help because we get no feedback from council
- The general feeling is that development decisions are a done deal before the meeting
- Citizen input is not considered
- Planning Commissions – appointed, input isn't included in decisions
- South Carolina law is development friendly
- There needs to be more citizen input. More infrastructure planning and more financial planning, to spend tax revenues where people live
- Opportunities for citizen input should be made more accessible. Elected and appointed bodies should not include members with vested interests
- Concern – the financial/political influence of developers on government officials and staff

- Citizens need to be proactive, especially towards planning; planners relied upon by citizens to represent their interest
- There is a lack of will to follow sound planning practices

In Dorchester County, South Carolina, 58% of forum participants who completed a post-forum questionnaire thought it is very important that public spending should favor existing development but only 9% thought that this pattern was strongly reflected in current policy (see Appendix G). In Kershaw County, South Carolina, 93% of forum participants were either very concerned or somewhat concerned that individual citizens have too little power to control the spread of housing subdivisions and new malls. Participant comments noted the financial and political influence of developers on government officials and staff believing that “local government gives in too easily to the seduction of developers” (see Appendix H).

The forums’ results demonstrated significant mistrust and a strong citizen disconnectedness, meaning that citizens do not believe that local elected officials take their concerns seriously. In addition, Kettering’s literature supports these citizen perceptions that they are alienated from the political process, have limited access to influence elected officials on issues important to them and therefore many have become cynical towards politics, policy and participation. The number of citizens who participated in the community forums was very small.

A contrary viewpoint raised by Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) is that people prefer not to get involved (rational ignorance). Hibbing and Theiss-Morse in *Stealth Democracy* (2002), noted that people don’t want to be involved in the democratic process; yes they distrust the process but they dislike even more when elected officials use the system to benefit themselves at the expense of non-decision-makers. Citizens don’t want to be taken advantage of by decision-makers and special interests (pp. 2 & 9).



### Democracy and the Deliberation Process

The Kettering Foundation is searching for ways to facilitate a paradigm shift that will “allow democracy to work as it should.” However, there appears to be a substantial divide in deliberation research. There are those who believe that the process of deliberation has taken hold and that citizens are indispensable to policymakers in making important or “wicked” decisions even though they do not provide evidence of results on citizens’ ability to influence policy decisions (Fredrickson, 1999 & Freeman, 2002). Others see minimal success from deliberation because of its limited application (Harwood, 2005) or its inability to connect public deliberation to public and governmental action (McAfee, 2006). Unfortunately, as noted, the Kettering Foundation has not conducted studies to determine if deliberative dialogue forums are effective in their ability to influence policy decisions.

Many Foundation associates hold to the view that democracy could work if citizens used the deliberative dialogue process to influence policymakers. This belief is encapsulated by Ellen Belcher’s statement that “it is contentious issues that cause communities to turn to institutions and institutions to turn to communities for solutions” (in the Foreword of Frederickson, 1999). Fredrickson (1999) conducted 60 interviews in his research and concluded that ‘local public institutions are seldom able to solve big problems absent extensive community involvement. To solve big problems, public officials leave their institutional homes and get into community and ‘do community’ (p. 36).’ He goes on to say that the disconnect between policymakers and citizens on non-routine matters is “overdrawn.” “There is a possibility that local officials ‘need’ community groups for the solution to big problems. It is possible, therefore, that officials are

more responsive to community groups when they are most needed and less responsive in routine matters (p. 36).”

On the other hand, critics of the deliberation strategy Hibbing and Theiss-Morse state that the Kettering Foundation’s view point is wrong. People do not want to be involved in the democratic process but, as noted, they also do not want to be taken advantage of by decision-makers and special interest groups. The authors consider Kettering an elite observer who “claim to know what the people really want – and that is to be involved, richly and consistently, in the political arena. If people are not involved, these observers [Kettering] automatically deem the system in dire need or repair (p. 3).”

The desired level of citizen participation varies in accordance with the individual and his or her interests. Some see the decision-making process as broken and prescribe greater citizen participation as a remedy. The League of Women Voters promotes greater citizen involvement in the process through the sponsorship of candidate debates and other methods. The recent “Tea Party” movement is based upon mistrust and anger at the current political system. They also believe that the process has been hijacked by special interests and that politicians do not listen to citizen concerns. Their methodology does not appear to include structured dialogue or debate. However, this study focuses on the Kettering Foundation citizen participation method to address the question - is deliberative dialogue a successful method for making the local decision-making process more responsive to the citizenry and possibly better promote the public welfare?

### Kettering Foundation Literature Review

Fredrickson (1999) and Freeman (2002) argue that there is a connection between the need for citizen input and important decisions. Kettering research questions how politics should work, asking “What does it take for democracy to work as it should?” And “What does it take for citizens to shape their collective future?” They also note that “the way people go about making decisions that affect them collectively influences the character of their politics. For instance, if decisions are made by a small, elite group and the decisions benefit a select few, the political system will have the same qualities of elite favoritism.”<sup>1</sup>

As mentioned, the Foundation is seeking a paradigm shift from a political system characterized as “elite favoritism” to a more pluralistic system where citizens are heard and have an impact on policy. The booklet, *Public Deliberation in Democracy Deliberative Politics*, states that Kettering’s objectives are: to act on difficult problems, and to change the process by which communities work (p. 1). The document also states that “wicked problems are more human than technical and are so deeply embedded in the social fabric that they never completely go away. They are as tricky as they are aggressive ... A public that can act effectively is needed most when communities face what some scholars have called ‘wicked’ problems (p. 6).”

Kettering also notes that “forums don’t lend themselves to firm conclusions about ‘what the public thinks,’ but they can shed light on how the public is thinking... Public thinking is different from the way professionals’ reason and political leaders make decisions. It isn’t a superior form of thinking; it is just another of the distinctive things that citizens do in their work. Acquainting officeholders with public thinking doesn’t usually have a direct effect on legislation

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.kettering.org/ketterings\\_research/public\\_deliberation\\_in\\_democracy](http://www.kettering.org/ketterings_research/public_deliberation_in_democracy)

or policy...” (p. 26). The booklet states that most forum attendees understand that officeholders have to represent their constituents as well as exercise their own best judgment. Forums are useful in that they reveal the boundaries citizens place around an issue and that this can be beneficial to decision-makers. However, if forums do not lead to a participant (citizen) conclusion and if they do not impact decision-makers, then how can citizens’ impact important decisions, thus “making democracy work as it should?”

The Kettering Foundation literature further states that democracy will work best when the public is active in the decision-making process through deliberative dialogue. Then there will be a new source of power within the local power structure. “Some people have power over others; some don’t. And those who don’t are seen – and often see themselves – as powerless. This perception leads to the assumption that those without power can be empowered only by the already powerful (p. 35).” “Another way to think of power is the ability to join forces and form working relationships. This is a power with, not over, and it is generated by democratic practices like deliberation (p. 35).” There is a belief that, before citizens include policymakers, they need to come together and work out their differences before moving to the next level. Would this process, if universal, change the weight that elected officials give to the concerns of citizen groups? (*Engaging Citizens: Meeting the Challenges of Community Life. A Kettering Foundation Report* [Working Draft - Revised]. October 2006.)

In 1989 the Kettering Foundation conducted four national focus group discussions with county commissioners, mayors, city managers and state legislators. The Foundation staff asked whether policymakers seek public input based upon the nature of the different kinds of policy issues. Focus group participants answered in the affirmative. The staff found that policymakers

do not seek a citizen role in issues of neighborhood conflict, issues that divide communities and community consensus issues but do seek citizen input on long-range issues. Examples of these kinds of policy issues include:

- Neighborhood conflict issues – zoning, roads or some other physical change or intrusion
- Divisive issues – fundamental disagreement over values (i.e., gun control, increasing property taxes)
- Consensus issues – everyone agrees that education is important but the agreement stops there
- Long-range issues are broad public interests that everyone can support until they get to the detail stage

The policymakers questioned said that there is a limited role for citizens in the policy process but that they are elected to make the decisions (Harwood, 1989).

However, other Kettering associates still argue for a larger citizen role in the local policy structure. Freeman (2002) states that “few localities are still governed by small communities of businessmen who call the shots for a community... Evidence has been accumulating that success in carrying out policy requires the public to be something other than passive recipients of bureaucratic ministrations” but then he provides no evidence of this citizen success (pp. 18-19).

After reviewing all of the Kettering literature related to this topic, it appears that there are divergent opinions within the Foundation on how to achieve its goal of great citizen participation in the democratic process. From the literature and the data collected, two associates expressed some doubt on the effectiveness of the Kettering process. McAfee (2006) stated that “for many years now, observers have noted the deep disconnect between public deliberation and politics... Our real challenge is to find a way to connect public deliberation to public policy-making, to find some way that public judgment can make its way into law. Something here is still missing” (p. 64). This study provides a platform to discuss the policy gap with bi-directional survey research

on the effectiveness of deliberation to influence decisions that reflect the best interest of the citizens.

### Study Goal, Objectives and Hypotheses

#### **Goal**

The goal of this study is to examine the local decision-making process for its responsiveness to citizen concerns and to study whether deliberative dialogue forums were an effective tool to change the local decision-making process so that citizens have a greater voice in the policy decision-making process.

#### **Objectives**

The central research questions of this study are who holds greater influences over local elected official on important growth and development decisions, elite pro-growth influencers or pluralist citizen groups and individual citizens? Were deliberative forums and effective tool to change the decision-making process?

The following objectives helped maintain and guide the course of the research and will help answer the research questions:

**Objective #1:** To examine the types of decisions made in growth and development policy (routine/important). To examine the sources of influence on local elected officials as they make growth and development decisions.

The 10 different sources of influence examined were – other council members; county administration and staff; advisory boards; organized citizen groups; one to one citizen conversations; state representative or senator; professional organizations such as realtors and home builders; individual developer; chamber of commerce; and, local radio and print media. These sources of influence were then grouped into four categories of influence based upon the

literature – political, professional, growth machine and citizen groups. The determination of what is a routine or important decision was left up to the survey participant.

**Objective #2:** To examine the interactions or “patterns of association” between the type of decision and the source of influence, i.e., important/routine v. organized citizen groups.

Kettering Foundation literature suggests that policymakers will turn to the public for “wicked” problems where it is important to understand “what the public thinks” on an issue. However, they also acknowledge that “acquainting officeholders with public thinking doesn’t usually have a direct effect on legislation or policy... public deliberation is useful because it helps locate the boundaries of the politically permissible – what people will or will not do to solve a problem” (*Engaging Citizens: Meeting the Challenges of Community Life [Working Draft – Revised]*, October 2006, p. 26). However, the question remains - is understanding citizen boundaries enough “to make democracy work as it should?” Contrarily, elite theory literature suggests that as an issue becomes more important elected officials are more influenced by elite pro-growth influencers than by citizen groups and individual citizens.

**Objective #3:** To examine the impact that growth and development forums have on who citizens perceive has greater influence over elected officials in their decision-making process.

Information from the 2008 South Carolina State Survey was culled into two county groups (forum and no-forum counties): the first group consisted of the two counties that conducted growth and development forums - Kershaw and Dorchester Counties. The second, comparison group was made up of four similar South Carolina “bedroom” counties that did not conduct a forum - Berkeley, Lexington, Pickens & York Counties. This objective sought out any

correlations between the two groups and provided case study analysis using post-questionnaire data from the two counties that held forums.

## **Hypotheses**

From the objectives, seven hypotheses were formulated to address the research question. Hypotheses 1-5 address Objectives #1 & #2 and were tested using the data from the 2007 Elected Official Survey. For these hypotheses the dependent variable was the degree of influence and the independent variables were the type of decision (routine/important) and the source of influence (10 different groups). Were routine decisions viewed differently than important decisions by local elected officials? Did different groups hold different levels of influence over elected officials; especially regarding growth and development issues (further theoretical understanding is found in Chapter 2). I hypothesized that the data would lead me to reject the null hypothesis (**H1**) and accept the alternative hypothesis (**H2**) that the type of decision changes the level of influence of the different groups.

**H1** In the growth and development decision-making process the type of decision does not alter the degree of influence on elected officials by the different groups (null).

**H2** In the growth and development decision-making process the type of decision does alter the degree of influence on elected officials by the different groups (null alternative).

The second set of hypotheses addressed the directional interaction or the pattern of association between the type of decision and the different influencers. If decision-makers turn towards citizens to understand “what the public thinks” as an issue moves from routine to important then the power of citizen influence would increase perhaps allow “democracy to work



as it should.” Here, the policy-maker receptiveness of citizen influence would increase on so-called wicked or salient decisions.

From the elite theory and growth machine literature reviewed in Chapter 2, one might surmise that citizen influence would decrease as a decision moves from routine to important or wicked. I hypothesized that the data would lead me to reject the null hypothesis (**H3**) and accept alternative hypothesis (**H5**) that as the decision move from routine to important, the influence of citizens will decrease (co-vary negatively).

**H3** As the type of decision moves from routine to important, the degree of influence of the citizenry on elected officials does not change (statistically independent).

**H4** As the type of decision moves from routine to important, the degree of influence of the citizenry on elected officials co-varies positively.

**H5** As the type of decision moves from routine to important, the degree of influence of the citizenry on elected officials co-varies negatively.

Hypotheses 6 & 7 addressed Objective #3 and were tested using the data from the 2008 Citizen Survey. For these hypotheses, the dependent variable was source of influence and the independent variable was conducting a growth and development deliberative dialogue forum. Here one could surmise that, if sources of influence were well established, a new process (deliberation) would not alter existing relationships between elected officials and elite influencers, as compared to similar bedroom communities, (null hypothesis **H6**). The Kettering contention is that once citizens believe that elected officials have heard them that their voice now counts, they have influence (**H7**).

**H6** Communities that have conducted official growth and development deliberative dialogue forums will not differ on the perceived sources of influence than those who never conducted an official forum (null).

**H7** Communities that have conducted official growth and development deliberative dialogue forums will differ on the sources of perceived influence than those who never conducted an official forum (null alternative).

### Study Overview

The following chapters investigate actual and perceived group influence over decision-makers and decisions in the local power structure. The study focused on the level of influence under two different scenarios and explores to what extent, if any, the deliberative dialogue process affected citizens' perceptions of the influence and effectiveness of the forum process.

The investigation reviewed and drew conclusions from a series of surveys administered in the state of South Carolina in 2007 and 2008. The first survey (2007) asked local elected officials who holds greater influence in their decision-making process, in the arena of economic growth and development issues (routine and important matters). The second survey (2008) asked South Carolina citizens, which group they believe holds greater sway over local government officials as they make decisions within this arena. In both surveys the choice included the same ten groups found on page 13.

The study explored the actual and perceived influence each of these groups had either individually or combined with other groups by examining the question of influence as the importance of a decision moved from routine to important. The study reviewed this question by the demographic characteristics of the respondents as well as by collapsing the types of different influencers' into four distinct sub-groups. This study contributes new insight into the local power structure by studying the influencers in local growth and development arenas. The understanding of local power structure opens up an avenue for policy entrepreneurs to potentially

have an effect on local policy decisions. In addition, the study is the first quantitative research to explore the effectiveness of the deliberation process to change the perceptions of influence. The study explored the question of forum effectiveness by comparing the sources of influence and power in counties that conducted a forum against similar counties that did not.

Although inferences can be made from study data regarding growth and development policy, its inference to other policy arenas and geographic settings has not been determined. The study results are limited in scope to South Carolina elected county council members and its citizens. In addition, South Carolina is an historically rural state that most recently became a suburban state. Therefore, the study's conclusions are most appropriate for similar rural/suburban jurisdictions and inference cannot be made to urban communities.

## CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Influence is a form of power. It is important for the policy analyst to understand the local power structure because of the influence it exerts upon local government decision-making in such areas as infrastructure location, the exercise of local police power and taxation policy. G. William Domhoff (2005c) defined a power structure as "... a network of organizations and roles within a society that is responsible for maintaining the general social structure and shaping new policy initiatives." The attempt by individuals or organizations to influence decision-makers to act on critical issues of importance to them is a centerpiece of politics. Different groups attempt to effectively use their power base to convince others to use formal power on their behalf. Thus, understanding which group or groups dominate the local power structure allows us to predict which existing policies will be protected and which new policy initiatives will have the greatest chance for implementation.

James G. March (1966) noted that "people have power because they are believed to have power and people are believed to have power because they have been observed to have power" (p. 328). Thus, individuals and groups must not only have a reputation for or an association with power but they must be willing to act, to exert resources and political skill in order to capture benefits. March stated that,

"With respect to the distribution of power, most studies indicate that most people in most communities are essentially powerless. They neither participate in the making of decisions directly nor accumulate reputations for power. Whatever latent control they may have it is rarely exercised..." (p. 323).

## Power and Influence

The source of power over others can be direct through formal positional power, or by having control over resources, technical skill or specific knowledge. Power also comes for one's access and ability to influence those that have formal power or control (Mintzberg, 1983). The study of power and influence is very relative to decision-making but it does not explain everything within the decision-making process. There are numerous internal and external relationships that affect outcomes within the growth and development public policy sphere of influence. These relationships are explored in greater detail later in this chapter.

It is the power to influence those with formal authority in the local power structure that the first part of this study is concerned with. Banfield (1961) stated that,

“To concert activity for any purpose... a more or less elaborate system of influence must be created: the appropriate people must be persuaded, deceived, coerced, inveigled, or otherwise induced to do what is required of them. Any co-operative activity – and so any organization, formal or informal, ephemeral or lasting – may be viewed as a system of influence. This is as true of the co-operative activity called government as of any other” (p. 3).

In different types of communities (urban/suburban/rural), the power to influence local economic growth and development decisions may emanate from different sources. Different types of communities contain different power relationships. For example, professionals may exert greater influence over economic growth and development decisions in urban areas and conversely state legislators may have more influence on local growth decisions in rural communities. Different community groups use their resources and skill in an attempt to influence decision-makers in arenas important to them. Therefore, the power to influence is based upon numerous factors including the type of power available, skill, resources, persistence,

arena of public policy (i.e., health care, law enforcement, arts funding), and the community's physical location. Dahl (1961), in *Who Governs?* addressed the importance of influence at the local level stating that,

“Indirect influence might be very great but comparatively difficult to observe and weigh. Yet to ignore indirect influence in analysis of the distribution of influence would be to exclude what might well prove to be a highly significant process of control in a pluralistic society” (p. 89).

It is important to remember two crucial community influence factors. First, at the local government level the policy arenas that can be affected are limited to those in which local governments can wield power. Thus, local government has much more influence in the economic growth and development arena than it ever could in such areas as health care or immigration policies. Second, the influencers within these local communities are usually small in number because of the limited size of the population and high levels of political/policy apathy found in many communities.

### Influence upon Decision-Makers

Do elected officials make decisions differently than others? What are the internal and external factors in their decision-making process? A significant body of work has been dedicated to the subject of decision-making (see Allison, 1969; Cyert & March, 1963; March & Simon, 1958). This section briefly discusses how elected officials act differently in the decision-making process than average citizens.

Rossi (1957) stated that,

“On one hand, we recognize the right of citizens to advocate and defend their individual interests as against the individual interests of others. On the other hand, we demand that the decision maker should be above partisan views and

should act in line with the interests of the community, without, however, specifying how one might identify in any particular issue what they may be. *Hence when we examine the outcome of an issue, it is easier to see which individual interests have been served than to judge whether the community interests as such have been upheld*" (author's italics, pp. 424-25)

There are internal factors in which we all hold (economic independence, position within the community, individual internal beliefs, etc.) and then there are external factors that are not felt by nondecision-makers such as lobbying from interest groups and the need to raise campaign funds. In addition, we do not know what is considered a routine or important decision by an individual decision-maker. Influence is not normally used on routine issues but attempts to persuade or coerce decision-makers to choose one alternative over another is more commonly found with important or salient decisions.

There are three sources of influence on decision-makers. First, there are the individual's own internal beliefs and values; second, there are influencers internal to the organization; and third, there are those external to the organization. This study focuses on the latter two sources. Internal influencers are other council members, the county administrator and staff, and advisory boards. They are part of the organization's power structure where relationships are more intimate and long-lasting. External influencers comprise of the other groups analyzed in this study and include state representative or senator; individual developers; the chamber of commerce; organized citizen groups, etc. Each of these groups exert different levels of influence or pressure upon decision-makers based upon their own self or group interest and the importance of an issue.

Comstock (1980) equated a 'policy decision' with an important or wicked decision in that these decisions were important or 'salient' to almost everyone. In his early study, Comstock

used the reputational method to rank influencers on different types of decisions and analyzed the data using the Spearman Rho's statistical methodology. In his study of hospitals, Comstock found that the influence exerted by different groups varied by the number of groups interested in the issue and whether the issue was considered routine or important.

### Routine v. Important Decisions

What makes a decision routine or important? Is it the type of decision, such as a zoning change, a plan amendment or the establishment of a tax increment finance district? Often, it is not the type of decision that makes it either routine or important but the long-term environmental, historic or economic ramifications; those programs with entrenched rent seekers or defenders; or those that deal with cultural or moral controversies. For example, a zoning change from one residential classification to the next can barely raise a peep out of the citizenry, but a proposal to rezone to allow an adult entertainment establishment can create a massive uproar based upon moral and economic values.

In an early research study, the Kettering Foundation asked decision-makers if they sought public input on four different types of policy issues and found that they did seek public input on long-range issues but did not seek public input on divisive issues, neighborhood conflict issues or consensus issues (Harwood, 1989). The Foundation defines these three contentious issues as “wicked” problems. Fischer (1993) describes a “wicked problem” as one with no solution or only a temporary and imperfect resolution. Some examples provided include dealing with the homeless, the siting of a nuisance, addressing drug addiction or the classic NIMBY situation.



Kettering literature stated that solutions to address these wicked problems are tricky and may never find a final solution (Public Deliberation in Democracy Deliberative Politics, p. 6).

### Community Influencers

Who has the most to gain or lose in local development decisions? There are a number of local players who are directly impacted by the success or failure of local growth and development policies with the landed elite being at the center.

“... to understand the behavior of the organization, it is necessary to understand which influencers are present, what needs each seeks to fulfill in the organization, and how each is able to exercise power to fulfill them” (Mintzberg, 1983, p. 334).

If we consider the local power structure as an organization then we need to understand the different influence power bases each of the players hold. The half-century old article *The Bases of Social Power* by French and Raven (1959) gave five simple and straightforward bases from which power and influence are exerted. These five bases are: legitimate power (elected, appointed, age, caste, etc.); reward power (rewards attached to future promises); coercive power (negative punishment and conforming to avoid negative actions); referent power (conforming to obtain praise and power); and, expert power based upon having superior knowledge or abilities. Each of the ten groups studied work from one or a combination of these bases of power. For example, the county administration and staff's base of power to influence the county council is expert power. They are the ones with the education and knowledge that are deferred to in this arena. However, power moves in multiple directions. Thus, the administration and staff can also be influenced by the county council with rewards or punishment, or by other players such as local developers, citizen groups, etc. with reward or referent power.

In addition to understanding these power bases, we need to understand how influence is exercised. Putnam (1976) distinguished between direct, indirect and spurious influence noting that direct and indirect influence are part of the foundation of elite theory; indirect influence is when an individual or group influences a second individual or group that decides on a policy. Within the local government organizational framework, county council members exert both direct influence (voting on a policy decision) and indirect influence over their fellow council members through either reward, coercive or reverent power. Spurious influence means that a decision-maker directly influences policy and also determines the stance of another person or group (Putnam, 1976, p. 68).

Each of the different influencers studied have something to gain or lose in the making of local government growth and development policy. Logan and Molotch (1987) stated that “...place entrepreneurs’ attempt, through collective action and often in alliance with other business people, to create conditions that will intensify future land use in an area” (p. 32). Players within the growth alliance may disagree with a specific decision but they all agree on, and promote, the aggregate need for economic development.

At the heart of the growth coalition are local land owners, developers, bankers, real estate attorneys and realtors and their professional organizations (i.e., the local chapter of the National Association of Realtors). Other growth machine players include the Chamber of Commerce (growth boosters), the local print and radio media and sometimes the local university. These growth machine players interact with different government units to form a growth coalition or growth machine (Domhoff, 2005d; Logan and Molotch, 1987; Molotch, 1976a; & Molotch, 1988).

Many local and state elected officials have growth machine backgrounds, particularly from the business and legal professions. Some of these elected officials become county or city council members while others travel further up the political ladder to become state representatives or senators. Whatever the level, the dominant policy focus is to protect and promote local growth. Local politicians are alert to the demands of specific influencers as well as from the general public because his or her political future is tied to both votes and campaign contributions. If an elected official does not have a growth machine background, he or she soon learns the power of this dominant interest group and the rules of the local game. Within the local power structure, council members look to their elected peers and other politicians for guidance on land use decisions. They also look to the professionals.

Government members of the growth coalition include both the county administrator and staff, and advisory boards. Local government administration and planning and zoning staff are hired to manage the downsides of growth (incompatible uses, traffic congestion, code violations, etc.) as well as develop future plans (and support) for new growth. Most medium to large size communities have an economic developer on staff whose job is to support existing businesses (economic development commission, downtown development association, etc.) and to bring in new businesses. The local planning and zoning commission, historic preservation review board or board of zoning appeals usually includes realtors, lawyers and other members of the growth machine, appointed by members of the county council. These players have a stake in the growth of the community because it affects their ability to earn a living.

The last group of influencers is individual citizens and organized citizen groups whom may or may not line up against the pro-growth lobbies depending on the type of issue, the cost of

action verses the expected benefit, and how it has been packaged by its proponents. Their influence is situational depending on whether or not it directly affects his or her life.

### Public Choice

Individuals and groups involve themselves in the political and policy-making processes for a number of reasons. Public choice theory is the application of economic theory to non-market decision processes “to examine the behavior of public officials as self-interested individuals and the applications of that approach for public policy” (Ulbrich 2003, p. 432).

Mitchell (1983), in describing public choice, stated that fiscal choices are at the heart of politics, and political institutions and activities can be understood by using economic analysis in non-market settings. In contradiction to early classical political economic theory, public choice does not distinguish between “economic man” and “political man,” noting that there is no such thing as “public interest” but only the interest of individuals. Therefore, all political behavior is based upon self-interest: political self-interest, interest group self-interest, and client self-interest. Within the confines of the theory, the political system is seen as a market for the supply and demand of public goods. Rational individuals will choose to maximize their financial interest through the processes of voting. However, scholars like Peter Self argue that “pocketbook voting has been disproved. Individuals do not vote based upon just one issue and many vote against their financial interest (Self, 1993).”

Within public choice theory, decision-makers’ voting behaviors are viewed as responding in accord with the median voter model. When applying economic theory to the politics of voting, the median voter model assumes that the goal of a politician is to get re-elected and the

best method to get re-elected is to base your votes on the policies that the median voter prefers. The median voter is a citizen who participates in the political process and represents the mid-point of voter interests in a voting pool. In a normal distribution of citizen preferences on an issue most cluster around the middle, thus “the easiest way to get the support (of at least 50% of the voters) is to concentrate on the larger block of voters that lie within one standard deviation (sigma) of either side of the mean” (Ulbrich 2003, p. 106). One weakness of this model is that decision-makers are seen to pay more attention to the median voter and public opinion just before an election and on their own or others’ self-interested agendas the rest of their time in office (Self, 1993).

Citizens and citizen organizations sometimes get involved in the process to defend themselves against policies that do not enhance social welfare and that grant concentrated benefits to specific groups at the expense of all or certain segments of the populace. Unfortunately, in many if not most situations “...citizens often find that the costs of asserting their claims exceed the benefits” (Ulbrich 2003, p. 96). Citizens prefer to ‘free ride,’ trusting non-profit organizations and others to conduct the research and defend them against encroachments. This form of behavior, called rational ignorance, describes voter apathy in the political and policy arenas. “Voters not only choose not to participate but also to avoid making the effort to acquire the information needed to participate intelligently in the political process. Rational ignorance is a choice based on weighing the costs of acquiring and acting on relevant information verses the expected benefits” (Ulbrich 2003, p. 96). Therefore, individuals choose not to get involved in the process unless the issue has immediate salience to them and there is

chances that the benefits of research and action will outweigh the costs of letting others influence the decision.

In this study, growth machine advocates are assumed to be involved in the process to either influence local government for perceived financial gains or to defend against encroachments upon previously attained benefits from the system (rent-defending). Interest groups, institutions and the media are responsible for placing issues and programs on the public agenda even when there is no public concern (Wilson & Dilulio, 2004). Wilson and Dilulio noted how groups influence the public agenda,

“Many policies are the result of small groups of people enlarging the scope of government by their demands. Sometimes these are organized interests...; sometimes they are intense by unorganized groups... The organized groups often work quietly, behind the scenes; the intense, unorganized ones may take to their causes to the streets” (p. 438).

The effects of policy decisions as they relate to the distribution of power among groups and institutions can be understood by examining the distribution costs and benefits of the proposed policy. Wilson and Dilulio (2004) defined costs as “any burden, monetary or non-monetary, that some people must bear, or think they must bear, if the policy is adopted” (p. 439). They defined benefits as “any satisfaction, monetary or non-monetary, that people believe they will enjoy if the policy is adopted” (p. 440). Therefore, “politics is in large measure a process of raising and settling disputes over who will benefit or pay for a program and who ought to benefit or pay” (p. 440).

Wilson and Dilulio (2004), like Lowi (1972) before them, described the politics of public policy in terms of perceived costs and perceived benefits. Costs and benefits are divided into distributive and concentrated categories. Within the local growth and development arena the

most commonly identifiable policy classification is Client Politics where benefits are concentrated to one or a few groups and the costs are widely distributed among the citizenry.

Wilson and Dilulio stated that,

“With client politics some identifiable, often small group will benefit, but everyone – or at least large part of society – will pay the costs. Because the benefits are concentrated, the group that is to receive those benefits has an incentive to organize and work to get them. But because the costs are widely distributed, affecting many people only slightly, those who pay the costs may be either unaware of any costs or indifferent to them, because per capita they are so small” (p. 443).

The other common typology is called Interest Group Politics where “a proposed policy will confer benefits on some relatively small, identifiable group and impose costs on another small, equally identifiable group” (p. 442). These systems of power and influence lead individuals with common interests to band together in groups to seek benefits and defend against policies that would take away benefits already gained from the local governmental system. This process is called “rent-seeking” or “rent-defending” whereby individuals and groups seek to influence decision-makers through lobbying or campaign contributions.

### Rent-Seeking

Rent-seeking is a branch of public choice theory that was developed by Tullock (1967) to describe individual or organizational efforts to secure a benefit from a governmental policy decision. In this study, we focus on rent-seeking in public sector economics or public welfare economics. In certain policy arenas different interest groups compete with each other to influence decision-makers on their behalf in order to redistribute assets or alter rules to benefit them usually at the expense of others. The role of the growth machine is to lobby for

governmental decisions that create growth in the aggregate. A common argument for a government expenditure that benefits private businesses and individuals is that the expenditure will create jobs, thereby benefiting the entire community. Growth machine lobbying is especially effective in communities where the electorate is politically inactive (rational ignorance) and the decision-making process is non-transparent.

Rent-seeking concerns interest groups and decision-makers alike. Governmental decision makers and other political actors “monitor the supply-demand process” of wealth transfer between demanders and suppliers, “they seek to pair those who want a law or a transfer the most with those who object the least” (Tollison 2004, pp. 521-522). In Wilson and Dilulio’s classification system this would be considered either Interest Group Politics (concentrated benefits and costs) or Client Politics (concentrated benefits and distributed costs) with the supplier of the wealth transfer being individuals “who do not find it cost effective to resist having their wealth taken away” or do not realize that it is being taken from them by the decision-making process (Tollison 2004, p. 521).

The ability to assign property rights is a significant power wielded by elected and non-elected decision-makers and one that is strongly sought after within the political and policy process. The power to influence the assignment of property rights is a centerpiece in local growth and development politics and considered a form of rent-seeking. Yoram Barzel (1997) stated that “because governments are run by people, government activity ultimately results from the interactions of maximizing individuals” (growth machine groups) and that “whoever takes any kind of action must expect to gain from it; indeed, the perceived net gain must always be the largest one available” (p. 133). Thus members of the growth machine capture the mechanisms of



local decision-making through lobbying efforts and by placing their members on councils and commissions thereby controlling the resource.

### Elitist and Pluralist Theory

Early elite theory was both psychological and sociologically based. Organizations needed strong leaders to control the organization and society needed strong organizations to manage the community. The common belief was that power was distributed unequally. Monarchs held absolute power with a small number of landed nobles and representatives of the church. It was not until the enlightenment that the idea of all citizens being equal comes into consciousness. Traditional elite theorists such as Mosca, Pareto and Michels shared the following general principles: 1) political power is distributed unequally; 2) people fall into two distinct categories, those that have significant power and those that have none; 3) “the elite are internally homogeneous, unified, and self-conscious;” 4) the elite are self-perpetuating drawing from their own to fill positions of power; and 5) “the elite are essentially autonomous” (Putnam, 1976, pp. 64-66).

There are a number of theories that have been applied to or developed around the dominance and influence of groups within local power structures. Some theories like Marxism and State Autonomy fail to adequately address local power structure analysis and thus cannot be used as a guiding or unifying theory for local growth and development power structure analysis.

This leaves us with two stalwarts of power theory, pluralism and elitism.

“Pluralists have argued that power is significantly decentralized, with opportunities reasonably available to organized groups seeking to influence policies of interest to them. ‘Elitists’ have argued by contrast that most effectively organized interests represent the upper or ruling class, and that

opportunities for others to influence public policy are generally open only to the degree they harmonize with upper class interests” (deZerega, 1991, p. 341).

Pluralism theorists believe that because of our fragmented system of government no class or permanent elite group hold power over all issues. Different ‘interest’ groups have power over different issues and try to influence elected officials to support their side of the issue through lobbying efforts and the ballot box (elections) thus making government responsive to the will of the people. In this open, self-correcting governmental system, bargaining and lobbying are core features within the interaction between competing interest groups, and between interest groups and elected officials.

Pluralism also has a strong foundation in free market economic theory where the decisions of elected officials are made within a public choice context. Elected officials are assumed to make public policy decisions based upon their ability to please a majority of the electorate (median voter model). “In these circumstances, it is almost certain that leaders of political associations would tend to choose overt policies they believed most likely to win the support of a majority of adults in the community” (Dahl, 1961, p. 101). However, this base is fraught with real world inconsistencies. The criticisms of pluralism theory include the argument that wealth and class resources skew the potential influence of poor people and their representative organizations in comparison to the influence of wealthy individuals and groups on elected officials. Public choice assumes that all parties have equal information on which to make a decision, but this is not the reality. Wealthy, well organized groups have the funds to research and provide favorable information to elected officials. Citizens (especially poor and marginalized citizens) will not exert effort in an attempt to influence a decision unless it directly

affects their person or livelihood. At all levels of government, there is apathy or the withdrawal from the political process that limits the interest of and participation in the decision-making process (rational ignorance).

“The core of the elitist doctrine is that there may exist in any society a minority of the population which makes the major decisions in the society... the dominant minority cannot be controlled by the majority, whatever democratic mechanisms are used” (Parry, 1969, pp. 30-31).

Similar to pluralist theory, elite theory bases power in the organization. The difference is that pluralism argues that people and interest groups exert significant influence on independent decision-makers, while elitism argues that distinct groups of elite at the top of the hierarchy influence not so autonomous decision-makers. Pluralist theorists such as Banfield (1965) believe that local business leaders have too many conflicts of interest that keep them from joining together for the benefit of aggregate growth. In *Political Influence: A New Theory of Urban Politics*, Banfield stated that there are no “top leaders” pulling the strings on community development decisions. Although they could have sufficient influence to “run the city” they do not (p. 291).

Banfield suggested a number of reasons that the elite do not come together to run the city. He listed four reasons why he believed that the elite do not run the city. First, Banfield said that business leaders have too many conflicts to come together for the benefit of aggregate growth. Business leaders do have differences on the specific locations of growth and development but as Logan and Molotch (1987) stated,

“The desire for growth creates consensus among a wide range of elite groups, no matter how split they might be on other issues... Although they may differ on which particular strategy will best succeed, elites use their growth consensus to

eliminate any alternative vision of the purpose of local government or the meaning of community” (p. 51).

The second reason given was that large companies are now run by managers without roots in the community. However, Mills stated that “...the chief executives and the very rich are *not* [author’s emphasis] two distinct and clearly segregated groups. They are both very much mixed up in the corporate world of property and privilege...” (p. 119). If the company relies upon the community for retail sales or the provision of services, it is very unlikely that the manager of a large private or non-profit organization would not be part of the local power structure.

Third, Banfield stated that leaders do not communicate with each other, but this could not be further from the truth. In Atlanta, Hunter found strong support to validate Homans’ hypothesis, “The more nearly equal in social rank a number of men are, the more frequently they will interact with one another” (pp. 73-74). Mills and Domhoff found similar social class associations in their research.

Banfield’s final assertion was that organizations would be afraid to act and thus risk losing internal and external support. This assertion may not apply to local growth interests. Individuals and groups who earn their living and make money from the development or sales of property are always acting on their own behalf. Organizations such as a homebuilders’ association and an association of realtors are usually extremely active attempting not just to influence decision-makers but also to place members of their organization on local deliberative bodies. Pro-growth organizations work both overtly and behind the scene lobbying decision-

makers, developing information and forming public opinion through the local media and word-of-mouth.

All these points are disputed by leading elite theorists Hunter, Mills and Molotch. At the center of elite theory is the belief that, within specific policy arenas, one or two powerful interests dominate to the exclusion of other groups. “It is of the nature of the power elite that within it there is a good deal of shifting about, and that it thus does not consist of one small set of the same men in the same positions in the same hierarchies” (Mills, 1956, p. 287). Power does not form a single pyramid or clique but multiple pyramids that shifts based upon interest and need, “This pattern of a relatively small decision-making group working through a large under-structure is a reality... but the constituency of the pyramid would change according to the project being acted upon. In other words, the personnel of the pyramid would change depending upon what needs to be done at a particular time” (Hunter, 1953, p. 65).

The dominance of elite groups is also found in Kelso’s description of Corporate Pluralism. Kelso said that “no single party has the ability to monopolize all decisions, but certain groups have been able to acquire controlling power within individual policy areas” (Kelso, 1978, p. 47). Elite theorists recognize that the leaders work within certain constraints: “...elite theorists, like other power theorists, emphasize that average citizens sometimes have the ability to set limits on the actions of elites, especially when the elites are in conflict among themselves” (Domhoff, 2005a).

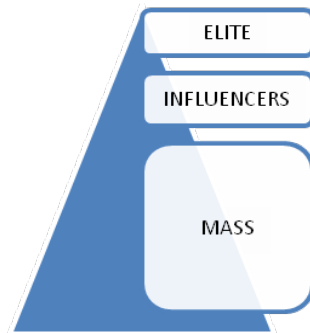
Within the local power structure, “on some questions that are considered settled, there is a constant pressure for conformity. It is only on the unsettled issues that discussion is permissible. Such questions as land policy, private enterprise, and other matters dealing with the

established interests are considered settled, and no discussion of a change of the rules is deemed desirable” (Hunter, 1953, pp. 181-182).

Finally, elite theory posits a pyramid or hierarchy in which a small group of leaders make decisions for the community in different arenas. Putnam (1976) described a stratified political system or hierarchy where those at the bottom lack almost all the prerequisites for exercising political power or influence and those few at the top having the necessary characteristics in “abundance.” The height and distribution of this pyramid varies from location to location and issue to issue. At the top of the pyramid are the arena decision-makers; a relatively small groups of local elites who use lesser groups to administer programs and projects (Figure 2.1). The next group in Putnam’s model of political stratification is a slightly larger group of influencers. Influencers do not have direct influence over a policy decision but do have indirect or implicit influence over decision-makers. Putnam includes “high-level bureaucrats, large land owners, industrialists, and financiers, interest-group leaders” and a few others in this stratum.

The next four groups in ascending order are activists, attentive public, voters, and non-participants. These groups may have some influence on different issues at different times but for the most part this influence is latent relegating them to mass.

Figure 2.1  
Model of Political Stratification



### 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> Century Elite Theory

Elite theory fell out of fashion for many power structure scholars and practitioners with the advent of pluralistic and liberal concepts during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. During this time period, in the United States, new concepts such as the “good government movement,” compulsory education and women’s suffrage took hold, competing against the dominant patriarchic socio-economic system. Reflection upon these new movements for political and social equality, Dahl (1961) stated that,

“Within a century a political system dominated by one cohesive set of leaders had given way to a system dominated by many different sets of leaders, each having access to a different combination of political resources. It was, in short, a pluralist system. If the pluralist system was very far from being an oligarchy, it was a long way from achieving the goal of political equality advocated by the philosophers of democracy and incorporated into the creed of democracy and equality practically every American professes to uphold” (p. 86).

It was not until Floyd Hunter’s book *Community Power Structure* was published in 1953 that elite theory once again became a central theory in the analysis of power. Hunter and later Mills (*The Power Elite*, 1956) wrote about the high concentration of power held by a few groups

in the local and national level, respectively. Both books described how a small group of elites sit at the top of the hierarchy of society and make local and national decisions of consequence.

Unlike pluralists like Dahl, Hunter and Mills saw power centered in a small group of elites presiding over large scale organizations; and unlike early organizational theorists such as Taylor and Gulick, they saw the organization as means to wield power as opposed to increasing efficiency (Domhoff, 2007, p. 3). In *Community Power Structure*, Hunter used a combination of the reputational method of power structure research, asking community citizens who has a reputation for power (who stand out? indicator) and observations and interviews of members of the power structure (the who wins? indicator). Mills used the positional method of analysis to determine which group or class is over-represented in positions of authority (who sits? indicator).

The third method of power structure research, the “decisional method,” used by Dahl and Banfield, maps specific influences in a variety of arenas through case studies; here power is believed to emanate from individuals and interest groups. All three network analysis methods make unique contributions to the study of power (Domhoff, 2005b).

Harvey Molotch (1976) introduced his theory of community power and political economy in the article *The City as a Growth Machine: Toward a Political Economy of Place*. In the article Molotch argued that “the political and economic essence of virtually any given locality... is growth” (p. 310). He argued that the desire for and control of the growth apparatus falls to the local landed elite, who benefit most as owners of a scarce resource. The local land elite, governmental leaders and others then form a “growth coalition” or “growth machine” to promote and protect all growth, thus enhancing the local rentiers. Molotch noted that the growth



machine is adept at getting local officials to redistribute government benefits [rent-seeking] to the elite based upon aggregate benefits and the desire for jobs (p. 311).

Most of the growth and development power structure research reviewed uses the decisional method with either in-depth or cross-cutting case study analysis. However, two researchers used some type of reputational method research. Hill and Durand (1987) surveyed 159 community elites in a Texas community using a combination of reputational and positional methods to determine which groups support growth (land based elites, governmental elites or absentee private sector elites). They found that all supported growth at similar levels. Then, they asked which one of the three groups they believed controlled the growth apparatus in the community. They found that land-based elites associated the control of growth with the public sector; the public sector associated growth with the land-based elite; and the absentee private sector elite saw a combination of both groups (public/private) controlling the growth apparatus. Thus, no one group said that they control growth and claimed that power was diffused among other groups.

Reese and Rosenfeld (2002) used both a survey (461 respondents) and a case study analysis of nine medium size cities in two states and one Canadian province in their research. The survey asked public government CEOs the question ‘who is the most influential group in the development of local economic development policy?’ They reported that 50% of local government officials believed that the local government was most influential while 34% believed that local business leaders were.

Parker and Partners (2005) used the reputational method of power structure research, asking 60 Australian federal and local elected representatives what most influenced their (elected

officials’) opinions in terms of political thinking and policy-making. The question was for all policies, not just economic growth and development issues. Eighty-nine percent of the respondents said that the media was either highly influential or influential; 88% said that their local constituents were either highly influential or influential; and 84% said the private organizations, business or industry representations are either highly influential or influential. Unfortunately, these studies neither allowed for a broad range of possible influencers (as mentioned by Logan and Molotch, 1987) nor did they provide any demographic understanding of the interviewees.

### The Growth Machine

In the mid-twentieth century, Floyd Hunter and C. Wright Mills’ wrote two extremely influential books that challenged the conventional wisdom on who holds power in American communities. Hunter used the “reputational method” to determine that economic growth and development power was highly concentrated in Atlanta (Hunter, 1953). Mills used the “positional method” of studying power and determined that there were many different organizational bases of power within society (Mills, 1956). Both Hunter and Mills moved organizational theory from how to make an organization more efficient to how organizations are used to attain and dominate power structures.

From this early research, and theory Logan and Molotch (1987) described local power structures as “land-based growth coalitions” made-up of “place entrepreneurs” whose primary political and economic focus was to maximize “rents” from land and buildings. The authors stated that “... the pursuit of exchange values so permeates the life of localities that cities

become organized as enterprises devoted to the increase of aggregate rent levels through the intensification of land use. The city becomes, in effect, a “growth machine” (p. 13). At the core of the growth machine elite are real estate investors. Molotch (1976) argued that the political and economic “essence” of every local community is growth or the operation of the growth machine (p. 310). Growth machines interlock pro-growth associations made-up of local developers, newspapers and the media, professional groups like the chamber of commerce, bankers, realtors, with government units (local politicians and local government officials). While all citizens may pay for community growth, it is these growth machine elites who mostly benefit from local policy decisions (see Lowi 1964, Wilson 1973, and Wilson and Dilulio, 2004).

The pro-growth lobby clearly understands the scarcity of developmental resources and the financial impact of governmental redistributive decisions, and uses their substantial skills, “resources and ongoing vigilance to sustain political decisions that preserve a given set of special relations” (Logan and Molotch, 1987, p. 31). Aggregate community growth is portrayed as a public good bringing in jobs and expanding the tax base, both worthy of public resources. However, as mentioned earlier, the reality is that only a small group of landed elite benefit from this redistribution of wealth from the masses to growth machine members. As Molotch (1976) stated,

“...under many circumstances growth is a liability financially and in the quality of life for the majority of local residents... local growth is a transfer of quality of life and wealth from the local general public to a certain segment of the local elite. To raise the question of wisdom of growth in regard to any specific locality is hence potentially to threaten such wealth transfer and the interests of those who profit by it” (p. 320).

Recent research suggests that in the last two decades there have been some changes in the effectiveness and makeup of the urban growth machine. Purcell (2000) and Strom (2008) argue that these changes are based upon the growing public realization that not all growth is good and that the urban economic players have changed with larger economic changes. Purcell (2000) argued that in Los Angeles a growth coalition still exists, pursuing an agenda of local growth “but it is no longer able to dominate the politics of urban land use to the extent it once did” (p. 85). A number of factors influenced this shift in effectiveness, including the rise of the no/slow-growth movement. The author noted that in Los Angeles, in the face of numerous local government reform efforts, the local government cannot be considered a reliable player in the coalition.

Strom (2008) argued that changes in the downtown land users in many cities have altered the downtown power structure. She stated that bankers and captains of industry are no longer the dominant players in the hierarchy of the growth machine. Instead, real estate developers and directors of non-profit hospitals and universities are today’s political influencers of downtown politics. Strom claimed that these new members can be more narrowly focused or tactical than earlier coalitions that focused more on the aggregate growth of the community. Although many local banks and insurance companies have merged and lost their local identity, Strom provided no evidence that they have lost their local influence. The composition of the elite hierarchy may have changed to be more inclusive of other community leaders and more focused on the specific location of new development, but that does not mean that they do not still retain their hold on setting the growth agenda in most local communities, especially in the South where paternalism

is still prevalent, elites are still entrenched in the growth and development hierarchy, and where progressive ideas are slow to take root.

### Summary

There is a wealth of literature on the subject of power and influence within governmental structures that provides a solid base on which to understand much of the local decision-making process. From the literature, one could infer that those individuals and groups that have wealth and power dominate the political process, ‘capturing’ elected officials for their benefit.

The mid-twentieth century witnessed the formalization of elite theory with the publications by Hunter and Mills. Their view of power became a counterbalance to pluralist theories of democracy. In their view, there is a small group of decision-makers (elected and appointed officials) in the local growth and development power structure, who are influenced by a number of groups. These influencers have different power bases from which to attempt to influence the decision-makers into acting on their behalf on important or salient issues. The most influential actors form a growth alliance between political peers, professionals and experts, and members of the growth machine. These different players are not active all the time on all growth issues, but as Mintzberg (1983) noted “...influencers pick and choose their issues, concentrating their efforts on the ones most important to them, and, of course, those they think they can win” (p. 336).

At the other end of the spectrum are pluralists such as Yankelovich who believe that full citizen participation will lead to shared values that we can all coalesce around and which elected officials will take seriously, “throughout our history, one of the most persistent themes in

American political thought has been how to create a community in which all Americans participate fully as citizens” (Yankelovich, 1991, p.1).

Public choice theory provides an economic framework for non-market decisions and assumes that there is no public interest. Proponents of the theory state that government should be run as a business and that the free market will provide the proper balance of public goods through the voting process. Unfortunately, as we have seen recently, an unregulated economic system has proved to be an unreliable provider of policies that benefit the public good.

Recent research has not brought us any closer to understanding which groups have or are perceived to have greater influence/power upon local decision-makers in the growth and development power structure. Previous research neither compared group influence on both decision-makers (Influence –Reputation Study) and citizens (Power-Reputation Study), nor divided out the influencers specifically or within closely associated groups (Domhoff, 2005b). This report opens up a new arena of reputational research previously not addressed in the literature. In addition, this research directly assesses the Kettering Foundation’s contention that elected officials will confer with citizens on important or ‘wicked’ decisions. This is especially important, because early Foundation research on this subject was never extended after the *Public’s Role in the Policy Process* study was published in 1989. It will also consider whether deliberative dialogue forums are an effective tool to change the decision-making process to allow for more citizen input.

However, beyond its libertarian foundation, public choice theory and its many branches significantly adds to the understanding of the subject. Most influential are the concepts of rent-seeking/defending, rational ignorance and the median voter model. Along with elite and growth

machine theories, these branches of public choice theory make up the theoretical foundation to study influence and power at the local government level.

### CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

This study collected reputational data to explore actual and perceived influence of different groups in the local power structure. Previous studies looked at the issue from only one vantage point, that of elected officials and growth machine members (Influence – Reputational Study), but no studies were found that asked the general public their opinion or explored their response (Power – Reputational Study) (Domhoff, 2005 b). This research included 10 potential influencers, developed from the literature and conversations with Dr. Alice Diebel, Program Officer with the Kettering Foundation. In addition, no previous studies were found that reviewed the demographic differences (characteristics of decision-makers and citizens) to provide a greater understanding of the relevance of influence based on geography and other demographic differences. Both of these items are addressed in this study.

The first central question addressed by this study is whether elected officials rely upon growth machine influencers or citizens and citizen groups in making important growth and development decisions. In order to understand the policy-making process fully all potential influencers must be considered in the analysis, not just the one's the researcher finds of interest. No previous study addressed influence in such a holistic manner. If it is found that one group does indeed possess more influence as a decision moves from routine to important, then practitioners and researchers need to address this difference in their policy strategies. The second central question examined the effectiveness of deliberative forums to change perceptions on who influences decision-makers in the local government power structure. Was the deliberative dialogue forum model an effective tool to change influence and power perceptions within the structure?



### Other Reputational Studies

Qualitative and quasi-experimental studies dominate much of the power structure research. However, three recent quantitative hybrid studies used the reputational method and one of the two other power structure research methods (positional and decisional/case studies). Reese and Rosenfeld (2002) started with an expansive survey of public and private executives and then focused on nine case studies. Parker and Partners (2005) included the same two methods but in reverse order; they conducted interviews and then followed them up with a survey. Hill and Durand (1988) conducted both positional and reputational method analysis that contrasted the attitudes of three groups in a community regarding growth.

Reese and Rosenfeld (2002) used regression analysis and found that the role of businesses in local growth was unclear and that the composition of local players differed from community to community. Parker and Partners (2005) found “local constituents or community” highly influential (36%) and “National and Local Media also highly influential (33%). However, when looking at the two top categories (Highly Influential and Influential) there was not much difference between four of the five groups. Besides cross-tabulation, no other statistical tests were employed. Finally, Hill and Durand (1988) used regression and factor analysis to argue that local public officials control only a small portion of the growth in their jurisdiction; “there are significant restraints on local governments’ ability to master their own destinies” (p. 744). None of these studies found significant differences in perceived influence between groups. Thus, the previous research leaves us without substantial conclusions about possible influence differences between levels of decisions or groups.

### Data Sources and Analysis Methods

Survey questions were designed by the study's author and Dr. Dennis Lambries, Research Associate in the Survey Research Laboratory at the Institute for Public Service and Policy Research at the University of South Carolina.<sup>2</sup> The 2007 Local Elected Officials Survey question measured the frequency that respondents chose one of the 10 sources of influence on routine and important growth and development matters; the results are in nominal data. Because the top three answers are collapsed, the data is somewhat limited in versatility but still provided significant information as to whether the independent and depended variables covary. A chi-square statistical test was employed to determine if the variables correlate with each other. However, even if they covary, it does not mean that there is a causal relationship. The variables may have a number of causes in common, or they might be influenced by another variable. Therefore, both the chi-square test and cross-tabulation were used to explore the relationship. The chi-square statistic compared actual sample results with what was expected; it did not identify the direction of a relationship, the type of relationship or determine the causation, but did imply that the relationship was not random and that the variables were not independent (measure of association).

The importance of the 10 Influencers was tested using the chi square method. They were also collapsed into four categories to determine if the relationships were independent by the groups found in the literature. The four groups were collapsed as follows: Political – state

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<sup>2</sup> The Survey Research Laboratory of the University of South Carolina's Institute for Public Service and Policy Research conducts approximately forty surveys a year. The research questions were inserted into the South Carolina State Survey. This semi-annual Survey was instituted in 1990 and was designed to enable policymakers, researchers and organizations to collect high quality public policy survey information. It has been utilized by the South Carolina Department of Revenue, the South Carolina Department of Education, and many other governmental, academic and non-profit organizations ([www.http://ipspr.sc.edu/sri/research.asp](http://ipspr.sc.edu/sri/research.asp)).

representative and senator, and other council members; Professionals – county administrator and staff, and advisory boards; Growth Machine – chamber of commerce, individual developers, professional organizations, and the local media; and Citizens – organized citizen groups and one-on-one citizen conversations.

The 2008 South Carolina State Survey used a Likert Scale to measure ordinal data. The data were analyzed using cross-tabulation, the frequency distribution of paired responses (Paired T-test), Spearman rank order correlation coefficient and a scatter diagram. Ordinal level measurement ranks the different influencers from lowest to highest based upon how the different groups were scored. “The Spearman Rank-order correlation coefficient is widely used with data that measures underlying variables at the ordinal level” (Jaeger, 1990, p. 71) and associations of normality. Rank order analysis allows for a normative interpretation of the data or how the score of one group compares with another. However, “...the intervals between values cannot be presumed equal” and the “appropriate inferential statistics for ordinal data are those employing non-parametric tests, such as chi-square, Spearman’s Rho... because Parametric tests require data of interval or ration level” (Jamieson, 2004, p. 1217). A scattergram was used to visually display the correlation found within the data (see Appendix E).

The data from the 2008 Survey constituted a sample of all county citizens, not just those who attended a forum. Follow-up experimental and quasi-experimental data from attendees would give a better understanding of the impact of the forum upon those who attended and is discussed further in Chapter 5. However, the data collected provided information on the response of the entire community and provided a context in which to understand the wider impact of deliberative dialogue forums.

The case study data collected from the post-forum questionnaires were quasi-experimental because there was no randomization and thus cannot be generalized to the larger community. The data collected and analyzed from the two experimental surveys can be generalized and replicated to the larger populations in the state of South Carolina.

The quantitative research data used came from two sets of telephone surveys administered by the Institute. The first data set explored the relationship between the degree of influence (dependent variable), and the type of decision and the source of influence (independent variables) upon elected officials in the decision-making process. The second data set explored the relationship between the sources of influence (dependent variables) and whether a community conducted a growth and development forum (independent variable).

The two questionnaires are point-in-time surveys. The first survey used a random sample of all county council members in the state of South Carolina (see Appendix D). In order to address the selection effect, fifteen attempts were made to contact the council person for the questionnaire.

The 2008 General Population Survey called upon a random sample of South Carolina households and further randomized respondents by interviewing the person in the household with the next birthday. Household respondents were weighted against individuals and for underrepresented individuals “in the population due to either non-response or the fact that certain households do not have a telephone (p. 194)” (see appendix I).

### Testing for Influence (Elected Officials)

*The 2007 Local Elected Officials Survey* selected a random sample of 218 of the state's 337 county council members to interview and had a response rate of 58.5%. The sampling error was +/- 3.95%. Interviewees were asked two questions concerning the sources that influence the decisions that they make concerning both routine and important growth and development matters. Respondents were asked to rank the top three sources of influence on both routine and important growth and development matters (see Appendix H): "Which THREE groups influence you the most in making your decision on ROUTINE growth and development matters?" And, "Which THREE of these groups influence you the most in making your decision on IMPORTANT growth and development matters?" The ten potential influencers are noted on page 13. The survey left the definition of "routine" and "important" up to the respondent.

The interviews were part of a larger survey conducted bi-annually by Clemson University and the University of South Carolina. The questionnaire provided respondent demographic information by geography (urban/rural) as well as by race and sex. The research methodology was limited to telephone interviews of current county officials (Appendix H). The respondents interviewed for this survey were selected from a random sample of county council members extracted from the 2007 Directory of County Officials published by the South Carolina Association of Counties. Interviews were conducted using the Institute's computer-aided telephone interviewing facilities. Results for questions answered by significantly fewer than 128 respondents (demographic characteristic subgroups of the population) had a potential for larger variation than those for the entire sample.

A chi-square test was employed to test hypotheses 1 - 5 and to explore potential relationships within the different demographic characteristics. The test was used to determine if there was a relationship between the degree of influence on elected officials and the type of decision (that they were either statistically independent or dependent). A chi-square analysis tested whether there is a statistical significant difference between the expected and observed results. This test was also run by percentages. The selected level of statistical significance was .05% that we could reject the null hypothesis without committing a Type I Error.

#### Testing for Power (Citizens)

*The 2008 South Carolina State Survey* interviewed 826 citizens, from a random sample of almost 2,500, and had an overall response rate of 36.2%. The sample's potential for error was +/- 3.5%. Interviewees were asked a series of questions to gauge their perceptions of the degree to which various groups' influenced growth and development decisions that elected officials make. The ten influencer groups were the same as listed in the 2007 survey. Respondents were asked how much influence they thought that each of these groups has on elected official as they make decisions about growth and development issues in their community. The response categories were: a great deal of influence, some influence, not much influence, or no influence.

Two counties (Dorchester and Kershaw, South Carolina) that held growth and development deliberative dialogue forums were compared to another group of South Carolina counties that did not conduct forums. This group was made up of four similar bedroom communities. The Spearman Rank-order Correlation Coefficient tests were employed to analyze the data set. The Spearman test measures' an underlying variable at the ordinal level (Jaeger, 71)

and was used to test hypotheses 6 & 7. The data from this questionnaire contained more information on the demographic characteristics of the respondents than the 2007 Local Elected Officials survey to include demographic data by age, education, and income. The selected level of statistical significance was .05%, so that we could reject the null hypothesis without committing a Type I Error.

### Case Study (Forum Counties)

The two forum counties provide a wealth of first hand qualitative data on the communities' perception of influence and the deliberative process (see Appendix G & H). Flip-chart comments and questionnaire results were collected from both communities' forums. Information collected was from a group of self-selected elected officials, professionals and citizens who were concerned about the issues of growth and development enough to come to a forum.

In January 2006, over 75 county residents attended the Dorchester County Growth and Development Forum and forty-five responded to the post-forum questionnaires. In November 2007, over 75 county residents attended a series of three forums in Kershaw County and fifty-four responded to the post-forum questionnaire. (see appendices G & H for additional case study information).

### Summary

The first survey was a cohort study, with elected officials being a bounded population. The second survey was a random sample of South Carolinians. The third was self-selected concerned citizens and officials who participated in a forum and answered the post-forum

questionnaire. All data sets were cross-sectional measurements (a single point in time). The data sets were organized and managed with EXCEL, SPSS software and Preacher's web-based Calculation for the Chi-Square Test.

With any study there are certain limitations. First, although the survey instrument asked elected officials who most influence them, it does not mean that they answered honestly and accurately. Second, the first survey did not include county data to directly compare responses from the elected officials and their county citizens. Third, the study only covered the state of South Carolina. The state is politically and culturally typical of other Southern states with a conservative, pro-growth business mentality and a long history of policies that favor business interests.<sup>3</sup> Regarding local governance, South Carolina is a uniquely Southern state, not only in belatedly adopting limited county Home Rule in the mid 1970s, but also with a long history of county/municipal government conflict. South Carolina adopted home rule in 1975, which permitted local governments all the power not specifically defined by state statute. However, the state legislature has continually and successfully impeded home rule by imposing extensive legislative statutes (mandates) and limiting local governments' fiscal authority (Pierce, 2005). The historic and continued delegation infringement upon local governance has also curtailed local opportunities for citizen participation and activism.

Fourth, neither the data nor the limited case study results permit close examination of the complex relationship between the influencers and elected officials. Nevertheless, the data sets gave substantial quantitative data from two specific populations – elected officials and citizens.

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<sup>3</sup> Historically, South Carolina economic policy focused on attracting manufacturing companies with low taxes, cheap land, and cheap labor cost (no unions).



In addition, the forum county case studies provided a context for understanding the relationship between those county elected officials and citizen perceptions.

Pulling back the curtain to see the workings of redistributive local policy networks is necessary to understand how these networks work to influence local government growth and development policies. Previous reputational research identified both private and public groups controlling the local power structure for growth and development issues. Unfortunately, these results were limited in their scope of local influencers to either elected officials or business leaders.

The reputational method of power structure research is underrepresented in this research arena. This research used both influence and power reputational methods (questionnaires) and also provided case study information to expand the breadth of information on citizens' perception on which group most influences elected officials in their decision-making. It also divided the potential influences down to the specific groups as discussed by Domhoff (2005d), Logan & Molotch (1987), Molotch (1976) and Yankelovich (1991).

## CHAPTER 4

### INFLUENCE: UPON ELECTED OFFICIALS AND AS PERCEIVED BY CITIZENS

Influence on elected officials can come from a number of different sources. This study looked at the ten categories of policy influencers individually and also grouped them into four distinct categories based upon local power base literature and their base of social power (French & Raven, 1959). The four influencer groups were: political, professional, growth machine, and citizen.

Other county council members and state representatives and senators were categorized as political influencers. This elected peer group has a multitude of power bases to exert influence over other council members with reward, coercive, and referent power dominating the mix. The professional influencers included the county administrator and staff, and advisory boards, all of whom officially rely upon their expert power base to influence local decision-makers. Advisory boards are supposed to be made up of local citizen experts in the field. Many of these local experts come from growth machine occupations including realtors, builders and attorneys.

Membership in the growth machine as described in the literature includes the Chamber of Commerce, individual developers, professional organizations (such as the local association of realtors) and the local print and radio media. All of these groups have a big stake in the growth of the community. Their influence is vast and varied. The local media may run unflattering or positive articles about a council member depending upon a certain policy decision. Developers and professional organizations may withhold their financial and voting bloc support for a council member based on a particular decision or promote their own candidate for that seat on the council.

The final Influencer group (Citizen) is made up of organized citizen groups and individual citizens. Citizen power is based upon votes and coercive power. Citizens will come together to protest something they do not like, in contrast to something they do like. Their power to withhold votes or campaign contributions is especially critical near an election or when related to a community “sacred cow.”

### The Relevance of Influence

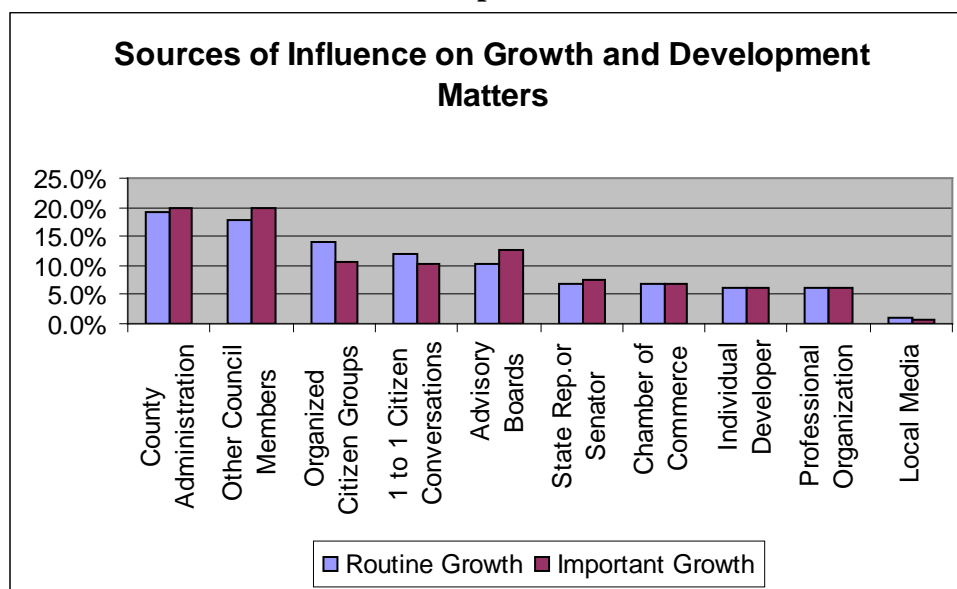
In this chapter, the relevance of actual and perceived influence is reviewed as it relates to local government growth and development policy. Understanding influence can provide valuable insight into how decisions are made (or not made) by decision-makers. Understanding the impact of deliberation as a tool to potentially change influence patterns gives us insight into its effectiveness to perhaps alter local power structures.

If growth machine groups influence elected officials more on important matters than on routine matters, and ahead of citizens and citizen groups, then such findings could support elite and growth machine theories. However, if citizens and citizen groups influence decision-makers more in making important growth and development decisions, then the pluralist and Kettering Foundation theories are supported. If counties that conducted growth forums have different perceptions on the sources of influence than no-forum counties then the process of deliberation and the differences in influence may be mutually dependent. But if forum counties have similar perceptions on the sources of influence, then the process of deliberation may not affect citizen perceptions of their own influence on elected officials and thus brings into question the effectiveness of the deliberative dialogue process.

### Influence upon Elected Officials

The 2007 statewide elected official survey provided definitive information on who influences local government elected officials on growth and development matters.

**Graph 4.1**



When the three possible responses to the questions are combined, the five most frequently mentioned sources of influence for routine and important growth and development matters were 1) county administrator 19.1% (routine) and 19.7% (important); 2) other council members 17.7% (routine) and 19.7% (important); 3) organized citizen groups 14% (routine) and 10.7% (important); 4) one-to-one citizen conversations 12% (routine) and 10.3% (important); and 5) advisory boards 10.3% (routine) and 12.6% (important). Four of the remaining sources of influence scored in the 6-7.5% range and local radio and print media consistently fell below 1% (Table 4.1).

There were minor differences noted between influences on routine and important growth and development matters. The council members sampled said that they were influenced by each other, the county administrator and staff, and advisory boards slightly more on important matters as opposed to routine matters. Citizen and organized citizen group influence decreased when an issue moved from routine to important issues (Graph 4.1 & Table 4.1).

**Table 4.1**

2007 Local Elected Officials Survey				
Source of Influence on Routine and Important Growth and Development Decisions				
	Routine Growth		Important Growth	
<b>County Administrator</b>	67	19.1%	61	19.7%
<b>Other Council Members</b>	62	17.7%	61	19.7%
<b>Organized Citizen Groups</b>	49	14.0%	33	10.7%
<b>1 to 1 Conversations</b>	42	12.0%	32	10.3%
<b>Advisory Boards</b>	36	10.3%	39	12.6%
<b>State Rep. or Senator</b>	24	6.9%	23	7.4%
<b>Chamber of Commerce</b>	24	6.9%	21	6.8%
<b>Individual Developer</b>	21	6.0%	19	6.1%
<b>Professional Organization</b>	21	6.0%	19	6.1%
<b>Local Media</b>	3	0.9%	2	0.7%
<b>Total</b>	349	99.8%	310	100.1%

A chi-square statistical test was employed to test the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between influence on local elected officials and the studied variables (routine/important, urban/rural, Black/White, male/female), that they are statistically independent at the .05 confidence level. In all whole number paired comparisons except one, we accept the null hypotheses. At first review, the chi-square results for the urban/rural dichotomy lead us to reject the null hypothesis for important matters. However, when the urban/rural percentages were compared to determine if there was an “N” effect, they exceeded the confidence level and thus supported the null hypothesis (Table 4.2).

### Urban v. Rural Sources of Influence

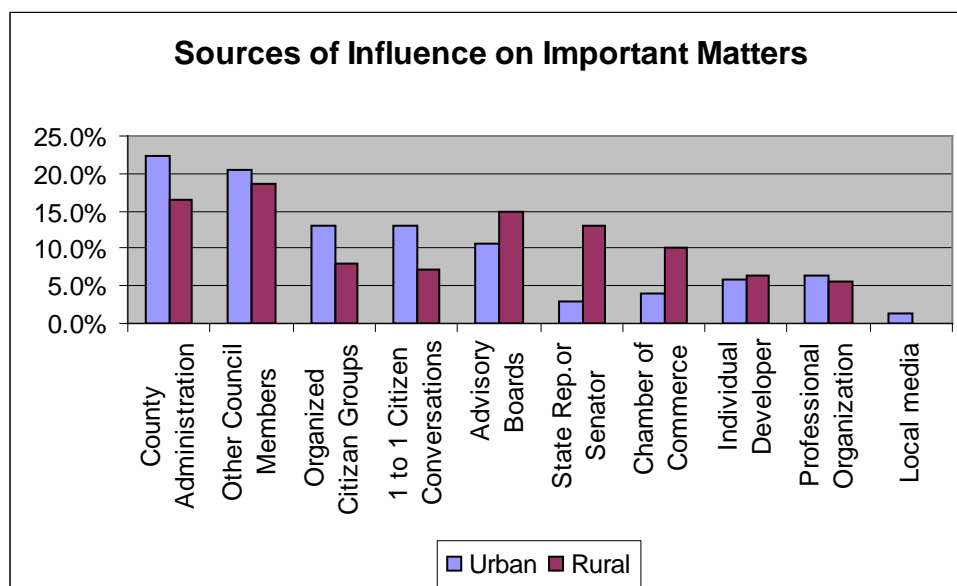
The chi-square test by the numbers revealed that influence on important growth matters and whether the local elected official resides in an urban or rural community were strongly statistically dependent (Table 4.2). The chance that this relationship is random is less than 1%, significantly below the 5% threshold. Unfortunately, this dependency did not hold up when the p-value was computed by percentages.

**Table 4.2**

Source of Influence for Urban and Rural Local Elected Officials On Routine and Important Matters				
	Chi-square	p-value	p-value by %	df
<b>Routine</b>	16.006	.0667	.4352	9
<b>Important</b>	22.933	.0063**	.0983	9
P < .05 * (16.92 chi-square), P< .01 ** (21.67 chi-square)				

Within the urban/rural dichotomy cross-tabulation (Table 4.4), a number of differences were observed, the strongest being that on important growth and development matters rural council members were over four times more likely to be influenced by their state representative than were urban council members (12.9% to 2.9%). On important growth matters, urban council members were more likely to be influenced by organized citizen groups (12.9% to 7.9%) and one-to-one conversations (12.9% to 7.1%) than their rural counterparts; while rural council members were more likely to be influenced by their advisory boards (15.0% to 10.6%) and over two times more likely to be influenced by their chamber of commerce (10.0% to 4.1%) than their urban counterparts (Also see Graph 4.2).

**Graph 4.2**



On routine matters, the relationships were similar with urban council members more likely to be influenced by organized citizen groups (16.8% to 10.5%) and one-to-one conversations (14.2% to 9.2%) than their rural counterparts; while rural council members were two times more likely to be influenced by their state representative or senator (9.9% to 4.6%) and three times more likely to be influenced by their Chamber of Commerce (11.2% to 3.6%) than their urban counterparts. The chi-square test on routine matters (6.67%) fell just outside the established 5% confidence level and well outside that confidence level when computing the percentages (Table 4.2). When the influencers were grouped together, they once again fell just outside the 5% level at 7.36% for routine matters (Table 4.3). However, on important matters, the combined influence groups fell inside the 5% confidence level but outside the confidence level by percentages, thus allowing us to accept the null hypothesis, acknowledging that although the cross-tabulation suggests some statistical dependence for both locations – urban and rural,

and important growth and development matter variables, the chi-square test by percentages found no statistically dependency for both individual and combined group Influencers; that they were statistically independent.

**Table 4.3**

Source of Influence for Urban and Rural Local Elected Officials On Routine and Important Matters (by 4 Combined Group Influencer Categories)				
	Chi-square	p-value	p-value by %	df
<b>Routine</b>	6.947	.0736	.188	3
<b>Important</b>	8.108	.0438*	.204	3
P < .05, * (7.82 chi-square)				

Table 4.4 displays the raw number and percentage breakdowns for the 10 individual categories of influencers and the four defined influencer groups. As noted, there were some significant differences between routine and important growth matters but those differences were slight once they were grouped together. Urban and rural council members almost all attributed slightly greater influence to the political, professional and growth machine groups as they moved from routine to important decisions. However, the percentage differences were within the 3.95% potential for error and considered modest. What was most striking is that these modest increases substantially come from the citizen influencer group. On important growth matters urban council members were less influenced by citizens and citizen groups by 5.1 percentage points than on routine growth matters; or stated another way, urban influence from the citizen group dropped by approximately 16.5% when the issue becomes important. This differential



was more dramatic in rural areas where influence from the citizen group dropped by approximately 26% when the issue became important. Therefore, from cross-tabulation it appeared that as a policy moves from routine to important the influence of the growth coalition increased slightly but more importantly, the influence of one-to-one citizen conversations and organized citizen groups decreased substantially. These movements, however, are not statistically significant at the .05% confidence level.

**TABLE 4.4**

Source of Influence on Routine and Important Growth Matters By Urban/Rural				
Influencer	Routine Growth		Important Growth	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
State Rep. or Senator	4.6% (9)	9.9% (15)	2.9% (5)	12.9% (18)
Other Council Members	17.8% (35)	17.8% (27)	20.6% (35)	18.6% (26)
<b>Political</b>	<b>22.3% (44)</b>	<b>27.6% (42)</b>	<b>23.5% (40)</b>	<b>31.4% (44)</b>
County Administrator	20.8% (41)	17.1% (26)	22.4% (38)	16.4% (23)
Advisory Boards	9.6% (19)	11.2% (17)	10.6% (7)	15.0% (14)
<b>Professionals</b>	<b>30.5% (60)</b>	<b>28.3% (43)</b>	<b>32.9% (56)</b>	<b>31.4% (44)</b>
Chamber of Commerce	3.6% (7)	11.2% (17)	4.1% (7)	10.0% (14)
Individual Developers	6.1% (12)	5.4% (9)	5.9% (10)	6.4% (9)
Professional Organizations	5.6% (11)	6.6% (10)	6.5% (11)	5.7% (8)
Local Media	1.0% (2)	0.7% (1)	1.2% (2)	0.0% (0)
<b>Growth Machine</b>	<b>16.2% (32)</b>	<b>24.3% (37)</b>	<b>17.6% (30)</b>	<b>22.1% (31)</b>
Organized Ctn. Groups	16.8% (33)	10.5% (16)	12.9% (22)	7.9% (11)
1-to-1 Ctn. Conversations	14.2% (28)	9.2% (14)	12.9% (22)	7.1% (10)
<b>Citizens</b>	<b>31.0% (61)</b>	<b>19.7% (30)</b>	<b>25.9% (44)</b>	<b>15.0% (21)</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>140</b>

### Hypotheses 1 & 2

- H1** In growth and development decision-making processes the type of decision does not alter the degree of influence on elected officials by the different groups (null).
- H2** In growth and development decision-making processes the type of decision does alter the degree of influence on elected officials by the different groups (null alternative).

For this set of hypotheses, we accept the null that the type of decision does not alter the degree of influence even for the geographic parameter (urban/rural). The chi-square test for individual and grouped influencers, by percentage, was above the stated confidence level. Cross-tabulation noted that on important matters rural council members were more likely to be influenced by state representatives and senators, advisory boards and the local chamber of commerce while urban council members were more likely to be influenced by organized citizen groups and one-to-one conversations. However, these patterns were not supported by the statistical test employed.

### Hypotheses 3, 4 & 5

- H3** As the type of decision moves from routine to important, the degree of influence of the citizenry on elected officials does not change (statistically independent).
- H4** As the type of decision moves from routine to important, the degree of influence of the citizenry on elected officials co-varies positively.
- H5** As the type of decision moves from routine to important, the degree of influence of the citizenry on elected officials co-varies negatively.

From the cross-tabulation tables, it was observed that not only did the degree of influence of citizens change, but that the degree of influence co-varied negatively with importance. Therefore, as a growth and development decision moves from routine to important the degree of citizen influence on elected officials' decreases. However, as mentioned, no level of statistical

significance was found to support the hypothesis that the type of decision alters the degree of influence and therefore a decrease in citizen influence cannot be inferred.

Thus the assertion that elected officials will look to citizens on ‘wicked’ decisions is not supported. The opposite directional movement is supported by the cross-tabulation but not by the chi-square test, by percentage. Therefore, we accept the null that as a decision moves from routine to important the degree of citizen influence on elected officials does not change.

### Summary

The cross-tabulation uncovered significant association between the rurality or urbaneness of a county council member and the source of influence on important growth and development matters (policies) but the association was not supported by the chi-square statistical test. That said it would still behoove local policy development practitioners to take geographical differences into consideration when developing both urban and rural public policy. For instance, before a rural growth and development policy is proposed, a preemptive lobbying effort on the local state representative or senator may prove beneficial. Or, in urban communities, advisory board and other professional sector members may be brought into the educational or deliberation process.

Of the 10 individual influencers, urban council members said that they were influenced on both routine and important matters by the county administrator and staff, other council members and organized citizen groups the most and not by members of the growth machine. Rural county elected officials were also significantly influenced by the county administrator and staff, and other council members but then influence was diffused between state representatives

and senators, advisory boards, the chamber of commerce, and organized citizen groups and one-to-one citizen conversations.

The cross-tabulations suggested that in almost all instances the influence of organized citizen groups and one-to-one conversations decreased when an issue moved from routine to important matters and the importance of advisory boards increased.

To recap the two sets of hypotheses, first, we accept the null that the type of decision does not alter the degree of influence. Cross-tabulation patterns within the urban/rural dichotomy were noted but not found to be statistically significant. Secondly, when using cross-tabulation, as the type of decision moved from routine to important the degree of influence co-varied negatively, not positively as some Kettering associates proposed. However, statistically the type of decision (important/routine) did not alter the sources of influence on decision-makers. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 (statistically independent) the null hypothesis is supported.

### Influence as Perceived by Citizens

The 2008 Questionnaire asked citizens a series of questions to gauge their perceptions of the degree to which various groups' influence the decisions that elected officials make about growth and development issues. The 10 potential influencers were the same as used in the 2007 survey. The response categories were: a great deal of influence, some influence, not much influence, or no influence (Likert Scale). The survey produced a wealth of data with significant differences among demographic subgroups. The overall perceived influence of the various groups is found in table 4.5 and subgroup information is provided in Appendix I.

**Table 4.5**

Citizen Perceptions of Group Influence				
	<b>Great Deal</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>Not Much</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>State Rep. or Senator</b>	48.3%	33.4%	13.2%	5.0%
<b>Council Members</b>	40.5%	42.7%	12.6%	4.2%
<b>Administration</b>	36.3%	43.5%	16.1%	4.2%
<b>Professional Organizations</b>	31.3%	46.9%	16.8%	5.1%
<b>Chamber of Commerce</b>	30.8%	49.9%	14.8%	4.6%
<b>Individual Developers</b>	29.0%	48.8%	17.8%	4.4%
<b>Local Radio &amp; Print Media</b>	27.7%	41.5%	21.7%	9.1%
<b>Org. Citizen Groups</b>	18.3%	49.1%	25.1%	7.6%
<b>Advisory Boards</b>	17.8%	59.2%	17.8%	5.2%
<b>Ind. Citizens</b>	16.9%	36.3%	36.7%	10.2%

In order to determine whether conducting a deliberative dialogue forum had an effect upon citizen perceptions' of influence, the data from the two counties with forums was culled from the data base. A similar culling process was employed for four similar counties for comparison purposes. The means and rank order of the 10 influencers for both groups were calculated and can be found in Appendix D. The forum and no-forum group data were compared to determine if they co-varied, thus providing predictability. However, even if the variables do covary, it does not always indicate a causal relationship.

### Power Reputational Study Results

#### **Paired Sample t-Test and Spearman Rho**

The Paired-Sample *t*-Test is a statistical procedure for testing the null hypothesis that two population means are equal and that makes use of data collected from two pairwise related samples. In this case, the pairwise samples are the two 'bedroom' counties that held a forum and the four comparable 'bedroom' communities that did not hold a forum. All these counties share

similar population growth rates, percentage of homes from new housing stock, employment out-migration rates, and percentage of county ad valorem tax revenue from owner occupied residential units (Molnar, 2004).

“The Spearman rank-order correlation coefficient is widely used with data that measure underlying variables at the ordinal level” and is considered the Pearson correlation coefficient applied to sets of ranks (Jaeger, p. 71). The two forum counties were Dorchester and Kershaw and the four no-forum bedroom counties were Berkeley, Lexington, Pickens and York.

Table 4.6 reports results of two types of statistical analysis tests (Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient and Paired Sample Correlation t-Test). Both found large positive correlations between the forum and no-forum communities, inferring an extremely high level of significance between the two pairwise sample groups. From Table 4.6, we can infer that on average the forum and no-forum counties covary together positively in selecting the 10 influencer groups. The correlation (r) measures the degree of linear relationship between the two groups. A curved fit regression scatter diagram of the means of the forum and no-forum counties is found in Appendix E.

**Table 4.6**

Forum Counties Rank v. No-forum Rank Correlation Tests		
	<b>sig. (2-tailed)</b>	<b>Correlation (r)</b>
<b>Spearman Rank Order (Appendix D)</b>	.006**	.799
<b>Paired Sample T-test Correlation</b>	.007**	.785
** Significant at the .01 level		

The Spearman and Paired Sample tests inferred a very high level of significance between the ranking of the 10 Influencers by both the forum and no-forum county groups. The correlation between the two groups was large and positive. The very strong consistency between

the two groups of communities inferred that the forums did not affect general county citizen perceptions on who influences; forums did not alter citizen perceptions of power.

The rank order of forum and no-forum county citizen survey results was then compared to the rank order of council members' influencers by the level of decision made, either a routine or an important matter (Table 4.7). No statistical significance between the two surveys' rankings of the influencers was found. Appendix D denotes the four group rankings.

**Table 4.7**

Citizen Survey Results v. County Councilmember Survey Results			
Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficients	sig. (2-tailed)	Corr. (r)	T-test (r)
Forum County Rank v. Routine Rank	.547	-.217	-.210
Forum County Rank v. Important Rank	.576	-.202	-.185
No-forum County Rank v. Routine Rank	.679	.150	.197
No-forum County Rank v. Important Rank	.636	.171	.221

#### Urban/Suburban/Rural Sources of Power

The second survey produced significantly more data than the first survey. As mentioned, this data provided more demographic parameters and found several differences among respondents to each of the influence questions based upon demographic characteristics. Appendix I notes that “slightly more than 10% (10.2%) of respondents indicated that individual citizens have no influence on growth and development decisions in their community. The percentage of respondents who feel that individual citizens have “not much” or “no influence” is greatest among residents of suburban areas in which 53.2% shared this opinion” (p. 192).

The first survey found no significant statistical geographical dependency between urban and rural elected officials on important matters but did find substantial cross-tabulation significance. Thus the urban – rural dichotomy was the only demographic characteristic pursued

in this chapter. The second survey provided an additional category of geographical variable – suburban. Therefore, it was not possible to make direct comparisons between the two questionnaires. However, we were able to statistically test the location parameters of this second survey population by once again using Spearman’s Rho to explore relationships between the two study groups (forum and no-forum counties). A deeper look inside the two groups by location parameters found numerous significant correlations, but the most interesting results came out of the analysis between the forum and non-forum counties (Table 4.8).

**Table 4.8**

<b>Location Variables by the Spearman Rho Test</b>		
	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>	<b>Correlation Coefficient</b>
<b>Urban Forum v. Urban No-forum Counties</b>	.880	.055
<b>Suburban Forum v. Suburban No-forum Counties</b>	.000**	.926
<b>Rural Forum v. Rural No-Forum Counties</b>	.049*	.634
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)		
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)		

The Spearman statistical test denoted a high correlation between the ranking of the 10 influencers and the suburban and rural parameters. The inferences from this test were: 1) for those respondents that considered themselves suburbanites in both groups, their ranking of influencers was extremely similar; 2) those who considered themselves rural also rank influencers similarly; and 3) those who considered themselves urbanites in the two different groups rank influencers very differently (Table 4.9).



**Table 4.9**

<b>Forum &amp; No-forum County Influencer Ranks by Location</b>						
	<b>Forum Counties</b>			<b>No-forum Counties</b>		
	<b>Urban N=7</b>	<b>Suburban N=18</b>	<b>Rural N=21</b>	<b>Urban N=36</b>	<b>Suburban N=55</b>	<b>Rural N=55</b>
<b>Other Council Members</b>	10	2	4	2	3	2
<b>State Rep.</b>	3	2	3	1	1	1
<b>Individual Developer</b>	1	1	2	5	2	6
<b>Prof. Organization</b>	1	2	5	6	4	3
<b>Chamber of C.</b>	8	6	6	9	6	8
<b>Admin. &amp; Staff</b>	8	5	1	4	5	4
<b>Advisory Boards</b>	5	9	6	9	8	9
<b>Local Media</b>	4	7	8	7	9	5
<b>Org. Citizen Groups</b>	5	8	8	3	7	7
<b>Individual Citizens</b>	7	10	10	8	10	10

Hypotheses 6 & 7

- H6** Communities that have conducted official growth and development deliberative dialogue forums will not differ on the perceived sources of influence than those who never conducted and official forum (null).
- H7** Communities that have conducted official growth and development deliberative dialogue forums will differ on the sources of perceived influence than those who never conducted and official forum (null alternative).

In regard to both the mean and rank comparison of influencers, there was a strong statistical significance between the two forum counties and the four no-forum counties. This implied that, on average, conducting a community growth and development forums had no effect upon the citizens' perception of power in their county. Therefore, we accept the null hypothesis (H6) and reject the alternative (H7). The forum did not have any impact on who county citizens perceive has power on growth and development decisions in their community.

### Summary

Almost 47% of the citizens surveyed believed that individual citizens had no or not much power to influence elected officials on growth and development issues. This response was significantly higher than the next level of influencers – organized citizen groups (32.7%) and the local media (30.8%). When the data were analyzed, there was no discernable difference between the forum and no-forum counties. Thus we accept the null (H6) that forums do not alter the perceptions of citizens about who has more influence on elected officials. The Kettering deliberative dialogue forum process did not affect citizen perceptions.

As with the first survey, the location variable was analyzed to discern if any local differences existed on which groups were perceived to have greater influence on growth and development decisions. The data analysis inferred that in both forum and no-forum counties the suburban and rural respondents had very similar opinions on which groups hold the most influence. The groups' urban respondents, however, held very different opinions on who holds influence. Unfortunately the data analysis did not provide further information for this significant difference in urban opinion.

Finally, the analysis (Table 4.7) noted a negative directional correlation between the two groups on both routine and important issues. Within the case studies, the two forum counties expressed a layer of community conflict as a reason for conducting the forums. The inference from the tests (correlations) noted that elected officials and county citizens have different opinions on which groups hold influence thus enforcing the feelings of mistrust between the two groups, as discussed in Chapter 1. Once again, however, the significance level fell outside the stated .05% confidence level.

## CHAPTER 5

### RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS

The question of influence at the local, state and federal levels of our government has been an important one for practitioners, researchers and citizens alike. There is a strong belief that citizen input and influence have been hijacked by special interests. In the arena of local government growth and development decisions, these special interests have been coined the ‘growth machine.’ Many organizations, including the Kettering Foundation, have attempted to alter what they have seen as politics-as-usual, where citizens have lost their voice in the policy process. In an attempt to “...make democracy work as it should” the Foundation developed a model to try to increase citizen participation and influence. The deliberative dialogue forum model is a process to address what they see as “problems that stand in the way of citizens acting together to meet the dangers that threaten their collective well-being” (Kettering workshop handout, 2/26/2007). Their goal is to close the gap between citizens and civic organizations, and formal civic organizations and governments, thereby enhancing citizen influence within the decision-making process (see Appendix A).

This study focused on the local growth and development arena to examine the influencers in the process. Did decision-makers change their receptiveness of influencers as a decision moves from a routine to an important issue? If they did change their receptiveness, did influence moved towards or away from citizens and citizen groups; and, was the deliberative dialogue forum an effective model to alter the perceived influence of different groups (specifically citizens) in the process?

Kettering researchers such as Yankelovich (1991), Fisher (1993), Fredrickson (1999) and Freeman (2002) describe a process dominated by ‘elite favoritism,’ citizen mistrust in the

process, and the belief that citizens want to be fully involved in the political/policy process.

They especially believe that citizen input is crucial on significant or wicked problems.

Unfortunately, these authors provide no empirical evidence to support their assertion that citizen involvement is indispensable to the process. Their assertion fails on two other fronts – theory and practice. First, rational ignorance theory states that most people are apathetic and would prefer to ‘free-ride’ on the research and actions of others. Most people are comfortable standing on the sidelines believing that the costs of participation do not outweigh the potential benefits.

As Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) noted, people do not want to be involved in the process but they do not want to be taken advantage either. Second, the forum model has been in place for over 25 years but attendance at forums is still constantly low (similar to public hearings, council meetings and local elections). Finally, no change in the level of citizen influence from conducting a forum was reported within their literature. From the research and personal observation I have to agree with McAfee, who stated that “...no amount of public deliberation will make a damned bit of difference to how politics-as-usual runs” (2006, p. 63).

A number of prominent influence and power theories, models and concepts frame this study. Elite theory describes a model of political stratification of elites, influencers and mass that make up the decision-making process. By this theory, most local decisions are controlled by the elite or growth machine interests, especially important decisions. Public choice theory notes that these interests band together to either promote or defend a ‘property right’ through the process of ‘rent-seeking.’ The action of rent-seeking transfers’ wealth from one group to another through either interest group or client politics (Wilson and Dilulio 2002, pp. 442-444). Within the local decision-making process, growth machine members lobby elected/appointed officials

for decisions that benefit aggregate growth. This process in turn can lead to citizen frustration and mistrust based on perceptions that citizen concerns do not matter and that the public welfare is not being met. This is especially predominant when the process is not transparent.

### Results and Discussion

This study had three objectives related to influence and the deliberative dialogue model. The first objective was to examine the sources and the types of decisions made in the growth and development policy arena. The study found that local elected officials report that they are influenced most by other council members, the county administrator and staff, and organized citizen groups. No statistically significant differences were noted in the race or sex of the council member. Within the urban/rural location dichotomy, differences were observed. Cross-tabulation results indicated that rural elected officials were influence by state representatives and senators, and the local chamber of commerce more than their urban counterparts. Urban elected officials were more influenced by members of the growth machine. However, when the data were analyzed by percentages, using the chi-square test, no statistically significant differences were found. Therefore, in growth and development decision-making processes, the type of decision does not appear to alter the degree of influence on elected officials by different groups (Hypothesis 1).

The second objective was to examine the patterns of association between the types of decisions and the sources of influence. Cross-tabulation results suggested that as an issue moves from routine to important citizen influence decreased; that they co-varied negatively. Urban citizen influence decreased 16.5% and rural citizen influence decreased approximately 26%

when an issue moved from routine to important. However, this movement was not found statistically significant using the chi-square test. Unlike Comstock (1980), this study found no statistically significant differences in the influence exerted by different groups based upon whether the issue was considered routine or important. There is no support for the assertion that as the type of decision moves from routine to important that citizen influence will increase. In fact, the cross-tabulation suggested the opposite – citizen influence decreased on important issues. Therefore, it is doubtful that, as Belcher, Fredrickson (1999) and others believe, officials are more likely to look to citizens as an issue becomes salient or wicked. For this objective, we accept the null hypothesis that as the type of decision moves from routine to important, the degree of influence of the citizenry on elected officials does not change (Hypothesis 3).

The final objective was to examine the impact that forums have on citizens' perceptions of who has greater influence in the process. Counties that conducted forums were compared to similar counties that did not conduct a forum to see if there was a difference in perceived power and influence. If the counties co-varied negatively then conducting a forum may influence citizens' perceptions on who holds the power to influence local decision-makers. However, the paired sample t-test and the Spearman Rho test found that the two groups co-varied positively. There was a very high level of significance between the rankings of influencers in both county groups (below the .01% level). Therefore, there is a very strong likelihood that forums do not alter citizen perceptions of power. We accept the null hypothesis that communities that have conducted a growth and development deliberative dialogue forums will not differ on the perceived sources of influence than those who never conducted a forum (Hypothesis 6).

This final finding raises significant concerns about the effectiveness of the deliberative dialogue model. If participating in a forum does not change peoples' perceptions of power within the process, especially their own influence and power, then how will it successfully promote other model objectives such as giving citizens a voice in the process, framing the issue around citizen boundaries, and addressing the gap between citizens and formal organizations and governments? The results raise both minor and major structural questions: are there tactical alterations available to make the model more effective? If not, should efforts continue to intertwine the model into the local power structure and decision-making process?

One suggestion is to include local policy-makers into the forum process. Inviting elected officials to listen to the concerns of the people could change the perception that leaders only listen to special interests. The deliberative dialogue model has not succeeded in changing the business-as-usual elite dominated process. Perhaps the forum model needs to be replaced by a new model for citizen participation and influence. However, this conclusion still leaves the problems of apathy and mutual mistrust.

A more structural change involves the Kettering Foundation's basic concept that people want to be fully involved in the process. This tenet needs to be reexamined. Citizens do not participate in local elections, public meetings or council meetings; they do not want to get involved in the process for one reason or another. Therefore, a reexamination of how much people want to be involved and what, if any, processes would facilitate that involvement needs to be examined.

### Recommendations for Future Research

Future research on these topics should start with Objective #3, the effectiveness of forums to alter the perception of ‘elite favoritism’ to a more citizen centered process. As opposed to previous Kettering research, future research must be more quantitative in design. This study is limited by the number of communities that conducted forums and the number of county citizens that answered the survey questions. Future research can include more counties and perhaps different subject areas. Growth and development issues are at the core of the local governmental process. However, other issues could provide similar salience and add to the body of literature. In addition, future research could conduct community-wide pre and post-questionnaires to better gauge the effectiveness of the model or introduce another model for comparison purposes. Getting elected officials to actually attend a forum, however, also needs to be successfully addressed in future research.

There are two other possible alterations to the Kettering process and model that deal with technology and consistency. Putnam (1999) stated the need for a new citizen involvement structure. One option may be to use the technology of the internet to bring citizens together to deliberate an issue. This option can increase participation, but may also skew participation towards those with technological access. A second option would be to find a way to infuse deliberation into the local government decision-making process. Unfortunately, as one Kettering associates noted, for 25 years the Foundation has been unsuccessful in this tactic.

As mentioned, cross-tabulation results provided both location (urban/rural) and direction of influence differences (patterns of influence by decision level and influencer). Future research in these areas could include the study of location differences and the homogeneity or



heterogeneity of communities. The deliberative model may find greater success in either rural or suburban communities, as compared to urban ones. In addition, directional studies of the influence of citizens in the decision-making process could include larger sample sizes and pre and post-test questionnaires and follow-up interviews.

Finally, the 2008 survey noted a number of significant demographic differences in perceived influence of the 10 Influence groups. The most prevalent differences were in demographic categories of education and age. In addition, the survey results suggested that “among respondents to the fall 2008 survey, the state representative or senator was perceived as exerting the greatest influence over community growth and development decisions” (Appendix I, p. 192). These survey results provided a wide base of influence data that can be followed up on individually or combined with other research such as in a time-lapse study.

### Policy Implications

This study does not support or refute any of the theories or concepts discussed, but some are considered better guides to frame the central questions posed than others. Specifically, both elite and public choice theory, and the concepts of rent-seeking, rational ignorance, growth machine and interest group politics are helpful lenses through which to understand influence and power in the local growth and development decision-making process.

Some of these theories and concepts support the Kettering Foundation research reports and articles. However, there appears to be two significant challenges to their approach to alter existing policy processes. First, the deliberative dialogue model did not appear to alter citizens’ perceptions on who influences decision-makers in the process. Correcting the failure of the

model may be as simple as expanding the scope of participation to include decision-makers or finding another method to infuse the model into the process.

Second, and more substantial, there is a belief or assertion that citizens desire full participation in the policy process that has not been examined. This core (unsubstantiated) belief is a centerpiece of Kettering's programs and initiatives. Citizen participation is the key to achieving their goal of 'making government work as it should.' Unfortunately, it appears that most citizens prefer to remain rationally ignorant, uninvolved in the policy process. Kettering researchers provide no qualitative research to refute this or support their own assertion. In addition, they provided no qualitative research that elected and appointed officials will look to citizens to help solve important or 'wicked' problems. After 25 years they made no significant inroads into infusing the deliberative model into the policy process. Therefore, if the Foundation wishes to continue in this direction it needs to first reevaluate the concept that citizens' desire to be fully involved in the policy process and secondly to conduct quantitative studies to test if the deliberative model really works.

### Conclusion

First, the study found no statistical evidence that the deliberative dialogue model was successful in altering citizens' perceptions on which groups influenced the decision-making process. Conducting a forum was not found to alter perceptions and therefore calls into question the forums' effectiveness to assist in overcoming mistrust between citizens and elected officials or to promote citizen influence in the process.

Second, the study found no data to support the Kettering position that the public desires to be fully involved in the public policy process.

Third, the study found that there may be geographic (urban/rural) differences in local government influencers. The question of differential influence in more homogeneous rural communities versus more heterogeneous urban communities needs to be explored further.

Fourth, the study found no statistical evidence to support the assertion of Kettering associates such as Yankelovich (1991), Fisher (1993), Fredrickson (1999) and Freeman (2002) that decision-makers will turn to the citizenry in deciding important or ‘wicked’ decisions. In fact, the cross-tabulation analysis suggested that as an issue became important elected officials were less influenced by the citizenry than members of the ‘growth machine.’

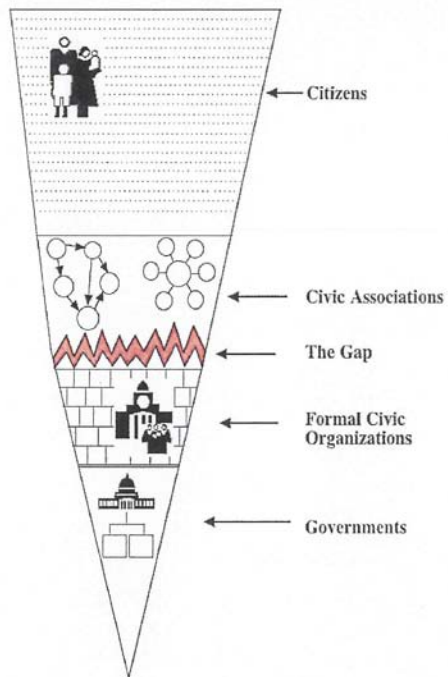
The results of this study raise significant questions that should lead the Foundation to reexamine its goals and tactics. The concept that people want to be fully involved in the process is unfounded. In addition, the central mechanism promoted by the Foundation, deliberative dialogue forums, has not been proven effective. These concerns need to be fully reexamined if the Foundation wishes to achieve their stated goal of “making democracy work as it should.”

## **APPENDICES**

# Appendix A

The Gap Between Citizens and Formal Organizations

## THE GAP



4/27/2006

## Appendix B

### Elected Official Tables by Parameters

Sources of Influence on Routine Matters						
	Geography		Race		Sex	
	Urban	Rural	Black	White	Male	Female
<b>Council Members</b>	17.8%(35)	17.8%(27)	14.3%(16)	19.3%(44)	19.0%(57)	10.2%(5)
<b>State Rep.</b>	4.6%(9)	9.9%(15)	9.8%(11)	5.7%(13)	7.3%(22)	4.1%(2)
<b>Developers</b>	6.1%(12)	5.9%(9)	3.6%(4)	7.0%(16)	6.7%(20)	2.0%(1)
<b>Prof. Orgs.</b>	5.6%(11)	6.6%(10)	5.4%(6)	6.1%(14)	5.7%(17)	8.2%(4)
<b>Ch. Of Commerce</b>	3.6%(7)	11.2%(17)	9.0%(10)	5.7%(13)	7.0%(21)	6.1%(3)
<b>Administration</b>	20.8%(41)	17.1%(26)	18.8%(21)	19.7%(45)	18.3%(55)	24.5%(12)
<b>Advisory Boards</b>	9.7%(19)	11.2%(17)	12.5%(14)	9.2%(21)	10.7%(32)	8.2%(4)
<b>Local Media</b>	1.0%(2)	0.7%(1)	0.9%(1)	0.9%(2)	1.0%(3)	0.0%(0)
<b>Org. Citizen Groups</b>	16.8%(33)	10.5%(16)	15.2%(17)	13.6%(31)	13.0%(39)	20.4%(10)
<b>Indiv. Citizens</b>	14.2%(28)	9.2%(14)	10.7%(12)	12.7%(29)	11.3%(34)	16.3%(8)
<b>Totals</b>	197	152	112	228	300	49
Respondents - Urban 75, Rural 53; Black 41, White 84; Male 109, Female 19.						

## Appendix C

### Elected Official Tables by Parameters

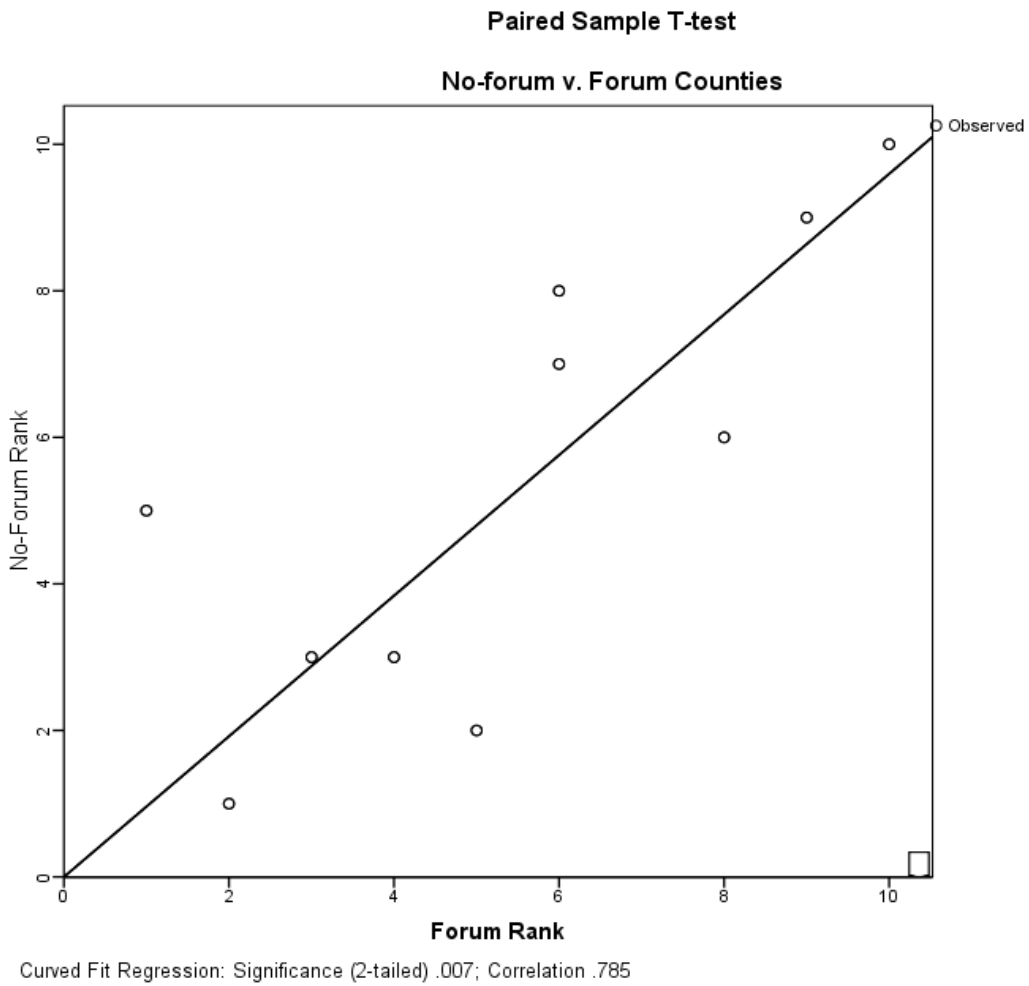
<b>Sources of Influence on Important Matters</b>						
	<b>Geography</b>		<b>Race</b>		<b>Sex</b>	
	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
<b>Council Members</b>	20.6%(35)	18.6%(26)	21.6%(22)	19.3%(39)	19.9%(54)	18.0%(7)
<b>State Rep.</b>	2.9%(5)	12.9%(18)	9.8%(10)	6.4%(13)	18.8%(51)	25.6%(10)
<b>Developers</b>	5.9%(10)	6.4%(9)	3.9%(4)	7.4%(15)	6.6%(18)	2.6%(1)
<b>Prof. Orgs.</b>	6.5%(11)	5.7%(8)	3.9%(4)	7.4%(15)	6.6%(18)	2.6%(1)
<b>Ch. Of Commerce</b>	4.1%(7)	10.0%(14)	7.8%(8)	5.9%(12)	6.6%(18)	7.7%(3)
<b>Administration</b>	22.4%(38)	16.4%(23)	21.6%(22)	18.8%(38)	18.8%(51)	25.6%(10)
<b>Advisory Boards</b>	10.6%(18)	15.0%(21)	13.7%(14)	11.4%(23)	13.3%(36)	7.7%(3)
<b>Local Media</b>	1.2%(2)	0.0%(0)	1.0%(1)	0.5%(1)	0.7%(2)	0.0%(0)
<b>Org. Citizen Groups</b>	12.9%(22)	7.9%(11)	8.8%(9)	11.4%(23)	10.7%(29)	7.7%(3)
<b>Indiv. Citizens</b>	12.9%(22)	7.1%(10)	7.8%(8)	11.4%(23)	8.9%(24)	20.5%(8)
<b>Totals</b>	170	140	102	202	271	39
Respondents – Urban 75, Rural 53; Black 41, White 84; Male 109, Female 19.						

## Appendix D

Citizen Survey - Culled County Influences by Means and Rank Order County Councilmember Survey by Rank Order Forum Counties - Dorchester (N30) & Kershaw (N17) Counties v. No-forum Counties – Berkeley (N31), Lexington (N52), Pickens (N18) and York (N54) Resort Counties – Beaufort (N24), Charleston (N58), Georgetown (N13) & Horry (N44)								
Citizen Survey Results(1)							Councilmember Results(2)	
Dependent Variable	Forum Counties	Rank	No-forum Counties	Rank	Resort Counties	Rank	Routine Rank	Important Rank
Council Members	2.21	5	2.10	2	1.89	1	2	1
State Rep.	2.04	2	1.90	1	1.89	1	6	6
Individual Developer	1.87	1	2.23	5	2.09	5	8	8
Professional Organization	2.13	4	2.21	3	2.00	3	8	8
Ch. Of Commerce	2.38	6	2.45	7	2.07	4	6	7
Administration	2.11	3	2.21	3	2.22	7	1	1
Advisory Boards	2.53	9	2.56	9	2.48	10	5	3
Local Radio & Print Media	2.38	6	2.46	8	2.21	6	10	10
Org. Citizen Groups	2.45	8	2.39	6	2.22	7	3	4
Individual Citizens	2.72	10	2.63	10	2.40	9	4	5
Question 1: How much influence does each of these groups have in making decisions about growth and development matters in your community? Mean Influence = (1) Great Deal, (2) Some, (3) Not Much, (4) None Question 2: Which groups influence you the most in making your decision on routine/important growth and development matters?								



## Appendix E



## APPENDIX F

### DEFINITIONS

Citizen Influencer Group: This group consists of organized citizen groups; and individual citizens through one-to-one conversations.

Decisional Method Research: Case Studies that examine the process and interactions of a decision within the decision-making process. A good example is Dahl's study in New Haven, Connecticut (1961).

Growth Machine: The interlocking of pro-growth associations made-up of local developers, realtors, bankers, chamber of commerce, local media, local government officials and universities. A coalition that promotes growth in the aggregate and directly or indirect benefits from growth.

Growth Machine Influencer Group: This group consists of the local chamber of commerce; individual developers; professional organizations (such as the local association of builders or the local association of realtors); and the local print and radio media.

Important Decision (matter): An early Kettering Foundation report identified these decisions in three areas - divisive issues, neighborhood conflict, and consensus issues. Examples include gun control, the siting of a homeless shelter, the demolition of an historic building, or a NIMBY situation. For this study elected officials differentiated themselves on what they considered important versus routine decisions within the public policy process.

Influence – Reputational Study: This type of study surveys citizens and groups on who has a reputation for power and influence within the community power structure. It's based in reputational method research.

Political Influencer Groups: This group consists of state representatives and senators; and other council members.

Positional Method Research: This is the who sits indicator used by Mills (1956) to determine which groups sit in positions of power and asks if all groups are equally represented or do some groups have exaggerated influence in the decision-making process?

Professional Influencer Group: This group consists of the county administrator and staff; and advisory boards.

Reputational Method Research: This method examines who has the reputation for power within a policy arena or community. The most famous use of this method was Hunter's examination of the power structure in Atlanta, Georgia (1953), where he surveyed different groups of citizens as to who had a reputation for power. This method is considered the who wins? indicator.

Routine Decision (matter): An early Kettering Foundation report identified long-range planning issues as routine. They are non-salient issues in the policy process. For this study, elected officials differentiated themselves on what they considered important versus routine decisions within the public policy process.

Wicked Problem: A problem is wicked when the diagnosis or definition is unclear, the location or cause is uncertain, and any effective action to deal with it requires narrowing the gap between what is and what ought to be – in the face of disagreement about the latter (saliency). The Kettering Foundation defines them as “...more human than technical and are so deeply embedded in the social fabric that they never completely go away. They are as tricky as they are aggressive ...” (Public Deliberation in Democracy Deliberative Politics, p. 6).

## **Appendix G**

# **DORCHESTER COUNTY GROWTH FORUM REPORT JANUARY 31, 2006**

**A report by:**

**William Molnar, AICP  
Director**

**Laboratory for Deliberative Dialogue  
Clemson Institute for Economic and Community Development**



## Introduction

Tuesday, January 31, 2006, the Dorchester County Council sponsored a three-hour growth forum at Summerville High School. The forum was conducted by Clemson University's Laboratory for Deliberative Dialogue and moderated by Mr. William Molnar (Director), Ms. Barbara Brown (Clemson Extension Service) and Ms. Frances Chavious (USC – Salkahatchie). The forum used the National Issues Forum material A Nice Place to Live: Creating Communities, Fighting Sprawl. Sixty-five people signed in, however it is estimated that 75 people in total attended. The forum was advertised by the county and refreshments were served.

## Process

After a brief introduction by County Administrator Jason Ward and Mr. Molnar, the participants watched a brief, 10-minute video that described the subject matter and outlined the three choices presented in the National Issues Forums (NIF) materials. The three choices discussed were: (1) Fulfill the Suburban American Dream, (2) Strengthen Cities, Stop Sprawl at its Source, and (3) Free Americans to Choose Life-styles. The participants were divided into three groups and moved to three different rooms to deliberate the issue. Over the next 2+ hours, the participants deliberated the issue of growth in Dorchester County. Their comments and concerns regarding each choice included views in favor and in opposition to each choice as well as the trade-offs involved (see next section). At the end of the group discussions, the participants were asked to complete the post-forum questionnaire. Forty-five participants completed the survey and the results are detailed in the Questionnaire section of this report.

A deliberative dialogue forum is a non-partisan tool to help communities come together to reason, talk and listen – to deliberate about a common problem and to understand each other. The forum provides a way for people of diverse views and experiences to seek a shared understanding of a problem and to search for a common ground for action. The three values of deliberative dialogue are: (1) it is a dialogue for weighing, not a debate for winning (**understanding**); (2) it is about what is most valuable to us, not just the facts alone (**values**); and (3) it is about making choices together (**action**).

A deliberative dialogue forum was used by Dorchester County to provide a platform for discussion about growth issues in the county. The process results are three-fold: (1) to provide better information on citizen sentiment towards growth to elected officials and other policy makers; (2) to allow citizens to understand and participate in multi-faceted growth and sprawl issues (involvement); and (3) to give elected officials and citizens a platform to move into action.

The three groups were brought back together to discuss their group conversations and the next step of the process for the information developed from the forum. This report includes: (1) the flip-chart comments from the three groups; (2) the post-questionnaire results compiled and briefly analyzed; (3) a copy of the participant sign-in sheets; and, (4) a copy of the Charleston Post & Courier articles about the forum.

## Group Flip-chart Comments

The three groups conducted lively conversations on the three choices. The results of those conversations are as follows:

### Choice #1: Fulfill the Suburban American Dream

- County not actively planning until 25 years ago
- Participation by public until “negative” issues
- Addressing growth – reactionary
- Absence of controls in county – 2/3 no control
- Three different government groups/entities need to work together
- Annexation with no public input – zoning
- Need for regional planning -CoG?
- Restrictive annexation laws
- Community did not recognize growth until explosive
- Land use planning – a need
- Planning and decisions for infrastructure done separately
- Only way to avoid sprawl is planning – where to develop, planned expansion
- Infrastructure – interconnected planning
- Planning needs to include financial planning to address infrastructure
- Moving out to find available housing
- Impact fees, can’t be used for schools, change law (course of action)
- Does growth pay for itself?
- Problem may be allocation of funds
- Additional funds being used to upgrade services to handle growth and to attract businesses
- Ways we grow and growth patterns
- Region has grown 6 times faster than population spread out with development
- Green spaces, use public dollars or require developers to provide
- Can’t talk about green spaces without discussing transportation systems
- Community gets in their own way to address growth and infrastructure - “not in my back yard”
- Green space v. green belts, formula for green space – percentage
- Impact fee is passed along to consumer
- State law determines how to use impact fees
- Affordable housing issue
- Developers not sensitive to services needed afterwards – roads, schools, etc.
- Something needs to be planned. We need a moratorium until we get a plan
- We need a tri-county plan
- Do you want someone in Charleston County to make a decision about you in Dorchester County?
- Collaboration between governments is needed
- Planning = process + preparation of plan + implementation of plan
- Plans require \$ Tax payers aren’t willing to fund a plan
- Citizens do not like to be forced to pay for the infrastructure to catch up with unplanned growth
- Association of realtors funded a study to look at what growth brings to a community. Is this dependent on time?
- Role of groups in planning process is very important

- Citizens need to have input and when council goes against the plan, the public should have a chance to comment
- The citizens do have an opportunity to comment on every decision
- Who controls growth? County council, citizens, developers
- Developments shall be timed to have infrastructure in place. The community should be able to question the decisions.
- WHAT ARE THE CITIZENS FEELINGS ABOUT INVOLVEMENT?
- We've got to figure out a way to compromise and live together. We need a plan that we can all live with
- In many communities there are good plans but they needed to be followed
- Going to council meetings doesn't help because we get no feedback from council
- The general feeling is that development decisions are a done deal before the meeting
- People leave out the owner of a property who have made and maintained an investment
- Would you move somewhere else if you did not have the planning process?
- Planning process is a façade... it isn't followed through on
- Planning process satisfies some and not others, look at implementation process
- Regional planning is necessary because we all impact everyone else
- Consequences of poor plan implementation – chaos
- Citizen input is not considered
- Participation must be broad and constant; it needs to involve all community stakeholders
- Impact fees need to be available for schools and other infrastructure
- New immigrants are moving to Dorchester County and have an impact
- There is a need for transportation coordination, highway access through Berkeley County
- Need for improved planning and zoning – coordination between regional governments (codes, enforcement)
- City – County coordination
- Need for public transit and a commuter line?
- Plan for homes, lands and cars
- School planning needs to be addressed. Mega schools cause transportation demand and removes schools from communities
- Is public transit being utilized? (cost/benefit)
- Another concern is the viability of local downtown commercial businesses
- Existing residents dream may be lost by new immigrants dream due to raising home costs and taxes.
- Trade-offs: different quality of school districts; affordability; aesthetics; local mileage rate; street design (cul-de-sac v. straight roads); lack of recreational opportunities (bike, walk); loss of diversity – home size, style homogeneous; loss of economic and social diversity in new neighborhoods; living further out from work and activities.

## Choice #2, Strengthen Cities, Stop Sprawl at Its Source

- Not as big a deal as say Atlanta, etc.
  - People are willing to give up urban benefits for rural lifestyle
  - Growth boundaries with good planning work but with bad planning fail
  - Big lot zoning is causing sprawl – leap frog development
  - People want to live here and have money
  - Tax issues – keep local \$, local
  - With urban redevelopment, how do you get your \$ back?
  - Urban redevelopment can drive out the working class (re-gentrification, Charleston migration to N. Charleston, Summerville)
  - Urban schools have tax-base issues
  - Problem – commercial leap frog development and abandon strip malls
  - Wildlife habitat may get less attention and money
  - Trade-offs: lost social contact with others; may get more exercise living in a city; in urban redevelopment projects tax money is used – financial; young families need affordable rural homes – demographics; safety is an issue
- 
- Summerville is not a city and Charleston is not a traditional city
  - If we did this, we would totally change Summerville
  - Also mean high density
  - If you don't like density then you need to be prepared for sprawl and vice versa
  - Public transit?
  - Everyone in Summerville works somewhere else
  - We don't have a viable public transit system
  - Prepare for a sustainable economy in Summerville
  - Property values would continue to increase as we concentrate on infill in Summerville
  - 1990 – 2000 property values increased 20%, people living in poverty rose by 11%
  - Mixed housing is necessary and needs to be considered. Planning should come from people on the ground and not developers
  - Community choices should be incorporated into all plans
  - Summerville is a community – people own their homes and have been part of the community for a long time
  - As a community gentrifies, suburbs deteriorate
  - 70% of the people who live in Dorchester County work somewhere else, and they do not want to ride public transit
  - There is no practical alternative to driving
  - Need a light rail system going from Summerville to Charleston
  - Percentage of people working in construction and development will eventually go away
  - 35% of the county population is employed in construction
  - #s are deceiving
  - 51% of the people who bought homes here last year moved here from other places and many were retirees
  - Can we stop people from coming



- Don't think we can tell a landowner "no" but we can ask that communities are made aware of community impacts before developments are approved
- Zoning can be used to control things
- Control extension of facilities
- Septic lowers densities
- Consider community resources that are limited when developing a plan and approving developments
- Environmental impacts should be considered
- Creation of special tax districts so that people moving in will pay higher taxes for their growth
- What about traffic?
- Can't give money to schools but can give it to roads
- If you build it they will come and they will live there
- If we didn't have traffic problems we wouldn't have problem with development but it's more like if development paid for itself we wouldn't have a problem with development
- Planning Commissions – appointed, input isn't included in decisions
- Cities are strong but are we encouraging sprawl through decisions?
- Can't build the way out of congestion
- Summerville always has been a bedroom community of Charleston
- Have to sell mass transit – image problem
- There is a range of affordable housing

### Choice #3, Free Americans to Choose Lifestyles

- Zoning regulations push sprawl, some groups strongly oppose regulations
- Teachers, firemen, etc. have to go out from town to find affordable housing
- Density restrictions force that
- American dream – real expectations of its citizens
- All growth depends on government investment
- Government put limitations on services to be provided for development
- Planning can be incentives, not restrictions
- Regulations at times makes it easier for the bad development
- Developers should have to provide schools, YMCAs, etc. in mega developments
- Green space: use state-owned property could be traded
- Transportation: Park n' ride, commuter lanes on highway
- Because of inability to enforce our plans we let people do whatever they want
- Lack of zoning leads to CHAOS, you can do whatever you want as long as it doesn't impact me
- Don't want to live in a place where there is no zoning
- But that doesn't work sometimes – Cottageville Estates
- What can I do with my government?

- We live reactively but maybe we should be more proactive but both sides have to work together
- People wake up when they are threatened
- Values bring stakeholders together
- Values can be considered in the development of a plan
- Community needs to look different situations and look at different options and the cost of developments. Pay money to landowners to protect their land
- As a landowner, they feel as if their rights are being taken away
- How much is the community willing to invest in a development anywhere and everywhere?
- People have the right to use land as desired as long as it does not adversely impact neighbors
- There is a difference between freedom of choice (zoning, codes) in public policy development
- No protection of rural areas from land fills
- Zoning allows you to know the rules of the game
- Rules should be local for more choices
- Planning and zoning increases tax-base, leading to better schools and higher resale values
- Extreme use of land use regulations raise home prices (this excludes some people)
- Yes to reasonable growth controls
- Zoning consistency and changes are spotty
- Zoning does consider shared resources and preserves them (cultural resources such as buildings and the environment)
- No recognition between short and long-term impacts
- Communities need to be active in the democratic process (attend meetings, etc.)
- Where and who funds the infrastructure? Subsidies
- Coordination, coordination, coordination
- Who pays for growth?
- South Carolina law is development friendly
- Schools are the largest percent of the property tax bill
- Impact fees may not be graduated on the cost of the house
- Development fees are an option

Dorchester County Post-Questionnaire Results					
	Question	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not at All Important	Not Sure
1.	<b>Principles on which livable communities might be based. How important do you think each one is?</b>				
a.	Public spending on schools, roads, and utilities should favor existing communities rather than new developments	58%	33%	4%	2%
b.	Americans should have the freedom to buy and build as they wish	22%	53%	18%	4%
c.	Strict laws should protect rural areas from unplanned growth	40%	38%	22%	0%
d.	People should be free to use their cars and not be pressured to use public transit	22%	49%	24%	0%
e.	Government should limit the building of highways that enable people to travel long distances to work	20%	24%	47%	2%
f.	The government should invest public funds in parks, community centers, and green spaces to improve the quality of life in the suburbs	58%	31%	9%	2%
2.	<b>Looking at the list in Question #1 again. How strongly is each principle actually reflected in our current policies?</b>				
a.	Public spending on schools, roads, and utilities should favor existing communities rather than new developments	9%	58%	29%	2%
b.	Americans should have the freedom to buy and build as they wish	38%	42%	18%	0%
c.	Strict laws should protect rural areas from unplanned growth	9%	42%	49%	0%
d.	People should be free to use their cars and not be pressured to use public transit	36%	27%	36%	0%
e.	Government should limit the building of highways that enable people to travel long distances to work	2%	31%	62%	2%
f.	The government should invest public funds in parks, community centers, and green spaces to improve the quality of life in the suburbs	11%	53%	33%	2%
	<b>Very   Somewhat   Not at All   Not Sure</b>				
3.	<b>How Concerned are you about the issues listed below?</b>				

a.	Individual citizens have too little power to control the spread of housing subdivisions and new malls	69%	18%	13%	0%
b.	Public spending policies tend to favor building new communities over improving old ones	60%	33%	7%	0%
c.	Unfounded fears about new development threaten the rights of farmers and other property owners to sell their land	29%	47%	22%	0%
d.	Without strong controls, much of the green space that makes communities livable will disappear	53%	38%	9%	0%
e.	Restricting land for development increases the cost of housing	31%	29%	36%	2%
f.	There are too few incentives for developers to build in existing communities	44%	22%	29%	2%

## Post Forum Questionnaire Results

Forty-five of the participants completed the post-forum questionnaire. The questionnaire asks participants five close-ended questions (with multiple parts) and an additional two open-ended questions. These questions focused upon individual values and local government policy.

	Question	Favor	Oppose	Not Sure
5.	<b>How do you feel about these approaches to making policy on livable communities?</b>			
a.	We should use tax money to improve older communities, EVEN IF this slows down growth in other areas where many people want to live	69%	13%	13%
b.	We should strictly limit development in rural areas, EVEN IF this pressures families to live in increasingly crowded urban areas	31%	42%	20%
c.	We should stop trying to plan where people can live, EVEN IF this means that many older, poorer neighborhoods would suffer	18%	71%	7%
6.	<b>Which statement best describes how I feel?</b>			
a.	I am not at all certain what our public policy on livable communities should be	18%	36%	11%
b.	I have a general sense of what our public policy on livable communities should be	56%	7%	9%
c.	I have a definite opinion on what our public policy should be	44%	9%	20%

The Questionnaire results are non-scientific from a small group of concerned citizens. However, they are still considered informative on the communities attitudes towards growth. Some of the more interesting results include:

58% of participants thought it is very important that public spending should favor existing development but only 9% thought that the principle was strongly reflected in current policy

58% of participants thought it is very important that public funds be invested in parks, community centers, etc. but only 11% thought that the principle was strongly reflected in current policy

69% of participants were very concerned that individual citizens have too little power to control the spread of housing subdivisions and new malls

91% of participants were very concerned or somewhat concerned that without strong controls, much of the green space that makes communities livable will disappear

69% of participants favor the use of tax money to improve older communities, EVEN IF this slows down growth in other areas where many people want to live

71% of participants oppose the idea that we should stop trying to plan where people can live, EVEN IF this means that many older, poorer neighborhoods will suffer

In addition to the close-ended questions, the questionnaire asked two open ended questions regarding local and national public policy.

4. Do you have any other concerns about the public policy in this area?

- Yes, I am concerned about the affect of multiple water and sewer providers in small geographic areas that reduce economics of scale
- There needs to be more citizen input. More infrastructure planning and more financial planning, to spend tax revenues where people live
- Opportunities for citizen input should be made more accessible. Elected and appointed bodies should not include members with vested interests
- We must find a way to make “Mega” developments pay for the improvements that must accompany them: schools, roads, public services expansion, etc.
- No statutory mechanism for decision ( ) to work and act regionally
- Need to coordinate land use, transportation, schools, in regional planning, financial planning too
- Public policy is reactive not proactive. There is no community consensus on policy priorities
- Fiscal planning, alternative restrictions to zoning
- Too much competition between cities and counties to get real regional planning cooperation
- Taxes, school spending, administration salaries
- Local government gives in to easily to the seduction of developers
- Impact fees should be able to be used for schools and other infrastructure. We could lose our quality of life
- I am concerned over lack of consideration and consistence of the part of the various government agencies at the city, county and state levels. Adjacent cities do not work together, citizens all suffer
- The dire need for cross jurisdictional planning cities versus counties
- People also need to consider other species needs, not just human needs
- What next? Who or what group will keep these concerns front page news
- County officials are approving new development without adequate existing infrastructure
- We need to empower our public officials so that they understand and act upon the need to work with our communities to shape our future and plan our community investments
- Future of county council to consider voice of people and public hearings
- Development policies do not protect special places and the strong feelings of the citizens
- I think we need to make a greater effort to respect the diverse quality of life Americans enjoy. We ought to protect people’s ability to enjoy that from which they derive their quality of life
- We should balance property rights of developers with the desire for a livable community of existing residence with comprehensive planning. New developments are approved without consideration of impact on schools and infrastructure. BAD!
- Yes, protect the property owner
- Developers are given too much leeway. Trees are routinely clear cut to make way for high density housing
- The financial / political influence of developers on government officials and staff

7. Are there any other comments you would like to make about U.S. policy on livable communities?

- Poorer people are dispersed by gentrification. High density means high taxes, high crime, and lower quality of life. Stop building now!
- We can't pressure people to live a certain way. We have to respect the diversity this country affords us – one size does not fit all when it comes to livability
- Ownership of land isn't a license for unbridled use; landowners and elected officials should recognize this
- Look at European practices
- HELP!
- I think it is great to see a process like this, engaging citizen input
- U.S. policy should be managed at a regional level. Current policy does not serve the existing residents or the new residents well. Inconsistency and poor application of existing plans is hurting the quality of life in our community
- Local, state, and federal government must cooperate to save our quality of life
- More Park and Rides
- Regional planning
- U.S. policy????? There are few policies even at the local municipal level
- What policy?
- Plan regionally with an eye toward preserving what is unique
- Total lack of regional planning. We are totally out of control.

## **Conclusion**

Dorchester County recently experienced significant population and physical growth. The U.S. Census Bureau reported that from 1990 to 2004 the county grew by an annual rate of 2.1% and from 2000 to 2004 the estimated annual rate of growth was 2.7%. This growth is a concern for elected officials, long-term residents, and new residents alike. On the evening of January 31, 2006, seventy-five members of the community came together to discuss different choices for growth using the deliberative dialogue process. Through the process, they developed a better understanding of the issues and the values that their fellow citizens hold and share. Now it is up to local officials to take the comments and values discussed and develop land use and growth policies that will move the county forward for the next 20 years.

## **Appendix H**

### **Can Deliberative Forums Influence Community Politics? A Growth and Development Case Study**

A Research Report Sponsored by the Kettering Foundation

William Molnar, AICP  
Co-Director  
Laboratory for Deliberative Dialogue  
Clemson University  
March 28, 2008



## **Introduction**

To understand the nature of the relationship between deliberative forums and community politics we must first understand what deliberation is and what deliberative dialogue forums are. The Kettering Foundation defines deliberation as making decisions together through a process that clarifies values, struggles with hard choices, and weighs consequences of various approaches to an issue. Foundation President David Mathews stated that “deliberation increases the likelihood that our decision will be sound by helping us determine whether we are willing to accept the consequences of the action we are about to take. While we can’t be certain that we made the right decision until we have finally acted, deliberation forces us to anticipate costs and benefits, to ask ourselves how high a price we would be willing to pay to get what we want.”<sup>4</sup>

Deliberative dialogue forums are structured conversations of various lengths and formats that use discussion guides to lay out a range of possible approaches to an issue. The dialogue is a process in which community residents share information and opinions, discuss a range of solutions, and develop a sense of priorities. The thoughtful discussion provides a gauge on the public’s viewpoint regarding specific issues. Within the process, citizens not only discuss facts but go deeper, discussing personal experiences and things held valuable. At their best, forums help participants move toward shared, stable, well-informed public judgments based upon what is valuable to them about important issues. Through deliberation, participants move from making individual choices to finding common ground for action.

But does the community’s finding of common ground affect local politics? Will the public’s thoughts and values, derived from the process, influence local decision makers? And what is the nature of these influences or actions between public deliberative forums and local politics? The deliberative dialogue process is unfamiliar to most. Can the introduction of the process into a community affect local politics? This project sets out to address these questions through quasi-experimental design research.

## **Research Problem**

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<sup>4</sup> Mathews, David. *For Communities to Work*, Charles F. Kettering Foundation, Dayton, Ohio. 2002. p. 23.

The question of who rules is as old a civilization itself. Two major theories, Pluralism and Elitism, dominate the conversation. Do we really have government by, for, and of the people? Or are we ruled by a small oligarchy of self-appointed elites? Do we exercise control over government through interest groups that speak on our behalf?<sup>5</sup> I consider the Kettering deliberation model Pluralist, believing that the deliberative process will bring people together to act thus enhancing the public welfare. However, what if Elitism, not Pluralism, is closer to our current political reality? Today, there is a strong belief that the average citizen's opinion in the policy process is either irrelevant or marginalized. A common assumption is that economic and social elites strongly influence political elites and public policy, leaving the public disenfranchised and apathetic to politics and the policy process. If Elite theory dominates the political and policy landscape then what impact can citizens have on the process? Can deliberative dialogue forums be used to enhance the citizen's role in the democratic process? And if so, how can the people's deliberation influence local decision makers? Is the formation or joining of an interest group or one-on-one conversations with local elected officials the best method to influence the policy process?

Most people understand that the democratic process works best when all citizens participate. Unfortunately, as mentioned, many citizens have rejected the process, believing that their voice is not heard. Deliberative forums are seen as one tool to give citizens a voice in the democratic process. National Issues Forums are a well researched and structured process that give citizens a voice on policy issues and activates them to participate in the democratic process. The hope is that forum participants will move from forum participation to action, affecting public policy through either interest group or individual influence on political decision makers. Unfortunately, there is limited research demonstrating that the deliberative dialogue forum process has the desired effect of fostering more of an organic (populist) democratic process. There are significant realistic limitations to fostering local democratic practices such as apathy, the self selected limiting of the number and type of people that participate in a forum ("the usual suspects") and lack of time or sustained interest to join or create an interest group. And, there is the issue of how to communicate the results of a forum to elected officials. The most important

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<sup>5</sup> McCool, Daniel. *Public Policy Theories, Models, and Concepts: An Anthology*, Prentice Hall: New Jersey, 1995. p. 28.

limitation follows up on the communication issue, namely, that the public and elected officials do not know of or understand the deliberative process. Before one can describe the nature of the relationship between deliberative forums and community politics there has to be a relationship!

In order to develop such a relationship and place the deliberative dialogue process in a position of influence, there needs to be a paradigm shift from an Elitism based approach to a Pluralist based approach to politics and public policy. There is an obvious disconnect between citizen deliberation and its potential influence upon policy making. I believe that one method to address this disconnect is to change the way the message is communicated. Current methods rely upon a secondary communications connection (the public conveying their opinions and desires to elected officials through either interest groups or individual one-to-one conversations). This relationship is very weak and can be confusing, especially if the elected official does not know of or understand the deliberative process. The paradigm shift moves the communication to a primary connection where the local elected policymakers attend a deliberative forum, hear the thoughts and feel the emotions of the citizens expressed in the deliberative process. It is only through a primary communications connection that the relationship can become strong. Thus deliberative forums may become more of a factor to influence decision makers on a specific subject through a primary communications shift.

This report will describe two research design approaches, methodologies and findings for a series of growth forums conducted with the county council of Kershaw County, South Carolina and a survey administered to a random sample of South Carolina locally elected officials. The report's conclusions will include a series of issues raised by the Kettering Foundation, including: the relationship of the research to politics; and the organizational issues of innovation, legitimacy, networking and learning.

### **Research Description**

The Kettering Foundation's research proposal asks the question "what is the nature of the relationship between deliberative forums and community politics?" To address this question, I designed a two part study, the first part being a case study of Kershaw County, South Carolina using a quasi-experimental research design. For the second part, I constructed a cross-sectional

study (survey) that was administered through phone interviews to determine the sources of influence on local elected officials in the state of South Carolina.

The dual research approach was designed to, as much as possible; address both internal and external validity issues. Some of the criteria for good research were met in one or the other approach but other criteria were wonton, thus the reason for a two pronged approach. This was most important in addressing validity issues. First, the case study was limited to the seven members of the county council. There was no way to determine if their responses could be generalized to other communities. The pretest and posttest design establishes the time order of occurrences, and the treatment of three community growth forums to eliminate any potential spurious relationships (intrinsic factors). The pretest, treatment, and posttest were conducted all within three (3) weeks and the actual growth forums were conducted within 10-days. I was not able to construct a classical experimental design with a control group because of limited time, financial limitations and the small pool of willing participant available. Such a design that included more samples would have greatly benefited the extrinsic validity of the research. Finally, experimental mortality (drop out problem) was the main failure of the first research approach. Although the entire county council agreed to complete both the pre and posttest questionnaires and attend at least 2 of 3 growth forums the completion rate was dismal. This point will be elaborated upon in the Research Results section of this report.

The second research approach expanded on two of the main questions asked in the Kershaw County Council pre and posttest questionnaires (Appendix B, Appendix C); how much does each different group influence your decision on routine/important growth and development matters? These two questions were asked of South Carolina local elected officials. Unfortunately as noted earlier, most citizens and elected officials have not heard of or participated in a deliberative dialogue forum, particularly one on growth and development issues. Therefore, the survey did not include a response that mentioned public deliberation.

The Clemson Institute for Economic and Community Development (Laboratory for Deliberative Dialogue) contracted with the Survey Research Laboratory (SRL) of University of South Carolina's Institute for Public Service and Policy Research to conduct a telephone survey of a

sample of county council members to measure the sources of influence for the decisions that South Carolina county council members make concerning growth and development matters.

## **Research Methodology**

If the lack of primary communications between citizens and elected officials is weak then new methods need to be found. The method chosen for this research was to include elected officials in the deliberative process. Inviting elected officials to a deliberative dialogue forum (with the potential for allowing politicians a platform to pontificate on an issue) has been greatly debated in the deliberation community. This researcher is of the opinion that the best and most direct way that deliberative dialogue forums will develop a relationship with and potentially influence an elected official is to be inclusive. Set the ground rules so that all invited elected officials are there to listen, not pontificate. This can be enforced by a good moderator. Yes, having an elected official as part of the deliberation may influence how other participants act/react, but excluding them leaves the participants to rely on weak second level communications to carry the deliberative message. In addition, the real value of community deliberation is not the report at the end but the process itself. It is being part of the deliberative process that conveys the community's emotions and thought processes on an issue. This first-hand, primary communication influences people. So, by being inclusive can we shift the paradigm?

I assume that by being inclusive, a relationship can be developed (and tested) between the two variables. The first research approach attempted to test whether there is or is not a correlation between local elected officials attending a forum on growth issues (independent variable), and the impact of attending a growth forum as a source of influence on both routine and important growth and development matters (dependent variable). The hypothesis is that there is a correlation between a councilman's attendance at a growth forum and the forum's influence on the development of growth and development public policy. The null hypothesis is that there is no correlation between a councilman's attendance at a growth forum and the forum's influence on the development of growth and development public policy (statistically independent).

The measurements employed to test the hypothesis are found in the pre and posttest questionnaires distributed to the seven council members (Appendix B, Appendix C). The pretest questionnaire included their place on the political spectrum, information on public input resources and decision making influence questions. The posttest questionnaire asked the same public input and influence questions but also asked specific questions about deliberation and its place in influencing growth and development decision after attending a growth forum. The purpose of both surveys was to determine the impact of forum attendance on the local policymakers and by association community politics.

The process for conducting the growth forums and research began with a request from the county's state representative. Kershaw County is located north of the state capitol, Columbia, and is experiencing an average annual growth rate of 2%, predominately along its border with the city. The impact of growth has brought up a number of divisive issues including the cost of new infrastructure and the impact of new growth on farm and open lands. In August, 2007, I made a proposal to the county council to conduct a series of growth forums across the county that would result in a report of citizens' opinion of the issue. As part of the agreement, all seven council members agreed to participate in the study which required completion of the pretest questionnaire, attendance at 2 of 3 forums, and completion of the posttest questionnaire. Three dates in November were selected to hold the growth forums and they were held at local public schools in the three county municipalities (see Appendix A for more details on the process and forum results).

The research methodology for the second approach was limited to telephone interviews of current county officials (Appendix D). The respondents interviewed for this survey were selected from a random sample of county council members extracted from the 2007 Directory of County Officials published by the South Carolina Association of Counties. A total of 218 county council numbers, from a total of 337, were called by the survey interviewers. A total of 128 fully completed interviews were conducted. The response rate for this survey was 58.5%. Interviews were conducted using the Institute's computer-aided telephone interviewing facilities. This survey, like all surveys, has a potential for sampling error due to the fact that not all county council members in South Carolina were interviewed. Based on the total population and the sample size, the potential for error is +/- 3.95%. Results for questions answered by significantly fewer than

128 respondents and results for subgroups of the population have a potential for larger variation than those for the entire sample.

The interviews were part of a larger survey conducted bi-annually by Clemson University and the University of South Carolina. Respondents were asked to rank the top three sources of influence on both routine and important growth and development matters. The preliminary analysis differentiated between urban/rural as well as by race and sex.

## **Research Results**

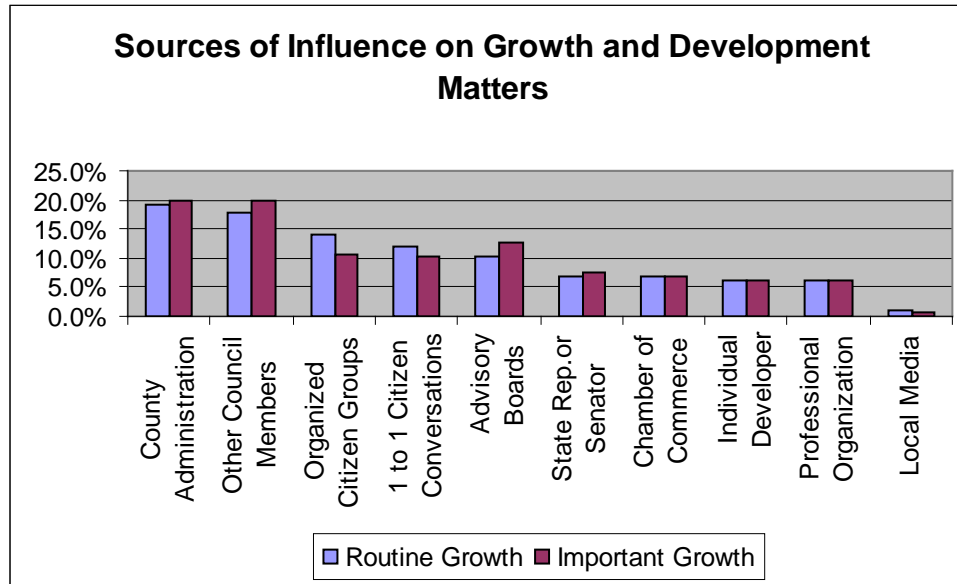
The response rate for the seven county council members was underwhelming. Only two councilmen completed the pre-forum questionnaire and the same two attended at least one complete forum. Two other councilmen attended the first 30 minutes of a forum but left for a legislative “fish-fry,” completely missing the deliberation. Only one councilman completed a post-forum questionnaire. Therefore, no viable data was obtained from the first research approach on the nature of the relationship between deliberative forums and community politics. In addition, it must be noted that on the eve of the forums the county administrator was arrested for accusing a councilman of sabotage on the county’s water system.

The lack of elected official participation in this approach means that the existence of a relationship between the variables is unknown. Although all seven council members have now heard of the deliberative dialogue process only two have experienced it and only one councilman registered his opinions in both the pre and posttest questionnaires. Therefore, no results can be posted. In order to test if elected official inclusion in the deliberative dialogue process will enhance communications more responses and samples are needed. The one councilman who attended at least one forum and completed both specifically designed pre and posttest questionnaires ranked the legitimacy of what he heard during the public issues forum as highly legitimate, noting that the Public Issues Forum (PIF) discussion was different from his usually contact with the public in meetings - “There is more time for public input. The PIF allows for more interaction and discussion instead of just speechmaking by the politicians.”

As noted, the second research approach does not directly address the question posed by the Kettering Foundation. However, the statewide elected official survey did provide some

interesting information on who influences local government elected officials on growth and development matters.

**Graph 1.**



The survey asked two similar questions: “Which THREE groups influence you the most in making your decision on ROUTINE growth and development matters?” And, “Which THREE of these groups influence you the most in making your decision on IMPORTANT growth and development matters?” The list of 10 potential influencers include: other council members, state representative or senator, individual developer, professional organization such as homebuilders or realtors, chamber of commerce, county administration and staff, advisory boards, local radio and print media, organized citizen groups, or one-to-one citizen conversations (see Appendix D for the Summary Report and additional tables). When the three possible responses to the questions are combined the five most frequently mentioned sources of influence for routine and important growth and development matters were 1) county administrator 19.1% (routine) and 19.7% (important); 2) other council members 17.7% (routine) and 19.7% (important); 3) organized citizen groups 14% (routine) and 10.7% (important); 4) one-to-one citizen conversations 12% (routine) and 10.3% (important); and 5) advisory boards 10.3% (routine) and 12.6% (important). Four of the remaining sources of influence scored in the 6-7.5% range with local radio and print media consistently falling below 1%.



There was only a slight difference noted between influences on routine and important growth and development matters (Graph 1). The council members sampled relied on each other and the county administrator, staff and advisory boards slightly more on important matters as opposed to routine matters. As mentioned, deliberative forums were not included in the list of potential influencers because of the lack of elected official exposure to the deliberative dialogue process. That said, exposing groups in the top five influencers (council members, administrators and staff, and advisory boards) to the deliberative process may be the best method for deliberation to influence community politics.

The cross-tabulations at the end of Appendix D compare the respondents' nominal characteristics (urban/rural, Black/White, male/female) to the frequency distribution of their ordinal answers on the sources of influence on routine and important growth and development matters. In addition, a chi-square test was employed to test the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between influence on local elected officials and the studied variables (routine/important, urban/rural, Black/White, male/female), that they are statistically independent. The selected level of statistical significance was .05% that we could reject the null hypothesis without committing a Type I Error. In all paired comparisons except one, we accept the null hypotheses. However, the chi-square results for the urban/rural dichotomy lead us to reject the null hypothesis for important matters. The test revealed that influence on important growth matters and whether the local elected official resides in an urban or rural community are strongly statistically dependent. Thus the difference between groups is significant but the chi-square test does not lend any proof of causality.

**Table 1.**

<b>Source of Influence for Urban and Rural Local Elected Officials On Routine and Important Matters</b>		
	Chi-square	p-value
Routine	16.006	.0667
Important	22.933	.0063**
df = 9, P < .005, ** significant at the 1% level		

Within the urban/rural dichotomy cross-tabulation a number of differences are observed, the strongest being that on important growth and development matters rural council members are over four times more likely to be influenced by their state representative than are urban

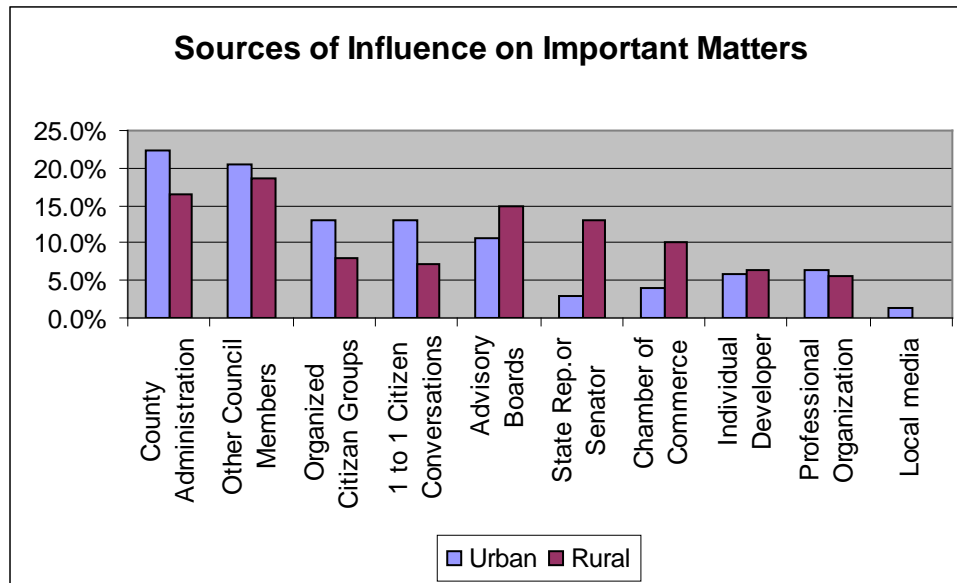
councilmen (12.9% to 2.9%). On other important growth matters urban councilmen were more likely to be influenced by organized citizen groups and one-to-one conversations than their rural counterparts; while rural councilmen were more likely to be influenced by their advisory boards and over two times more likely to be influenced by their chamber of commerce than their urban counterparts (Graph 2). A chi-square test was also run on the six sources of influence that demonstrated a statistical difference of 4% or greater (county administrator, advisory boards, organized citizen groups, one to one citizen conversations, state representative or senator, and chamber of commerce). These selected influencers demonstrated that the urban/rural differences are significant (Table 2).

**Table 2.**

<b>Six Selected Source of Influence for Urban and Rural Local Elected Officials On Routine and Important Matters</b>		
	Chi-square	p-value
Routine	15.745	.00761**
Important	20.798	.00088**
df = 9, P < .005, ** significant at the 1% level		

On routine matters the relationships were similar where urban councilmen were more likely to be influenced by organized citizen groups and one-to-one conversations than their rural counterparts; while rural councilmen were two times more likely to be influenced by their state representative or senator and three times more likely to be influenced by their chamber of commerce than their urban counterparts. As noted, the chi-square test on all sources of influence on routine matters fell just outside the .05% confidence level but when the six selected influencers from above were tested together a very strong difference between urban and rural local elected officials was demonstrated.

**Graph 2.**

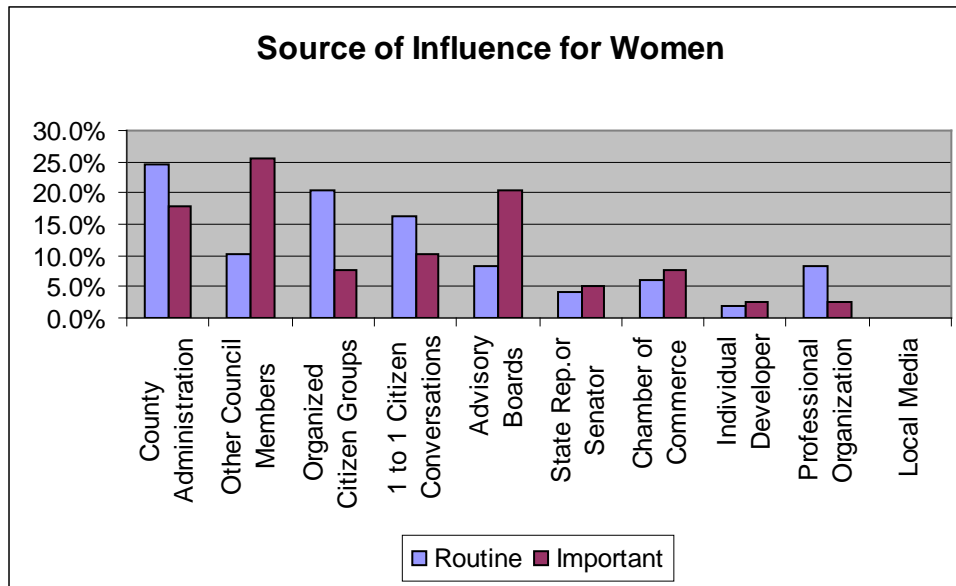


When the councilmen's race was reviewed the numbers of differences were smaller. Black council members were influenced by other council members on important matters (21.6%), significantly more than on routine matters (14.3%), where White's were influenced by other councilmen at 19.3%. Black councilmen were influenced by organized citizen groups more on routine matters (15.2%) than important matters (8.8%).

The variable with the largest number of cross-tabulation differences was gender. There was little variation between routine and important influences for males but the differences between influencers on routine and important matters for females and between males and females were numerous. However, the applied chi-square test found no reason to reject the null hypothesis, that the variables are statistically independent.

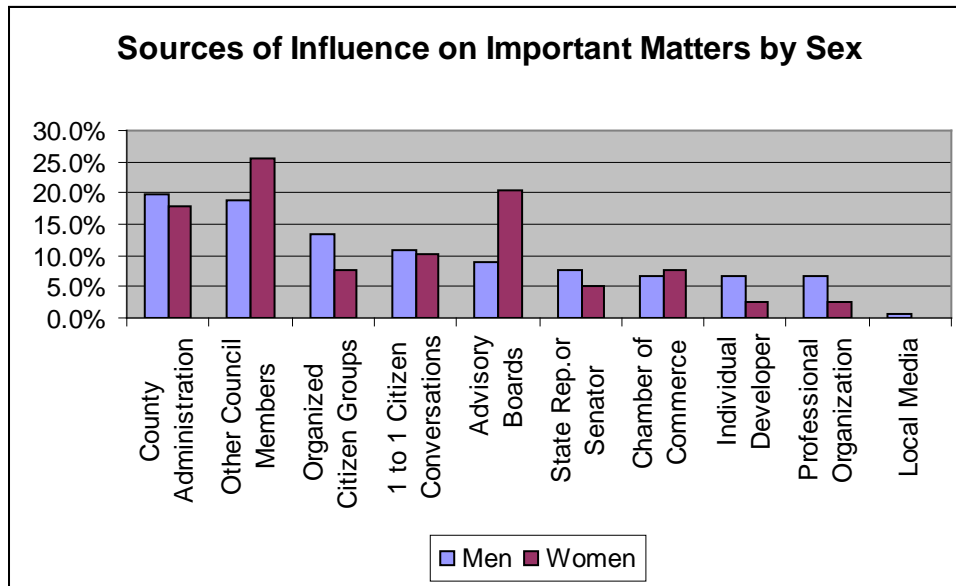
First, on routine matters female council members say that they are strongly influenced by organized citizen groups (20.4%) but this shifts dramatically on important issues to 7.7%. Second, on important matters female council members are significantly influenced (three times more) by other council members (25.6%) than on routine matters and two and half times more by advisory boards (20.5%). Obviously when the issue becomes more important the influence of citizens is substituted by the influence of experts and colleagues. These differences are nowhere as pronounced within the influencers of males. It needs to be stated that the number of female respondents (19) was small which increases the confidence level significantly.

**Graph 3.**



Third, on routine matters females are more significantly influenced by the county administrator and staff, organized citizen groups and one-to-one conversations than males. Males are more significantly influenced by other council members and individual developers on routine matters than are females. Finally, on important matters women are much more likely to be influenced by advisory boards (20.5%) than their male counterparts (8.9%). Female council members are more influenced on important matters by other council members (25.6%) than male council members (18.8%). On important matters male council members are more influenced by organized citizen groups (13.3% to 7.7%) than females, individual developers (6.6% to 2.6%) than females, and professional organizations such as homebuilders or realtors (6.6% to 2.6%) than females.

**Graph 4.**



### Summary

The research employed two different design approaches to determine the nature of the relationship between deliberative forums and community politics. The first approach was a pretest posttest design that attempted to measure the impact of deliberative forums on local elected officials. Unfortunately the high rate of experimental mortality undercut the usefulness of the limited data collected.

The second approach was a random sample questionnaire administered to current South Carolina locally elected county council members. The questionnaire asked respondents to ordinal rank the top three sources of influence on routine and important growth and development matters. This approach using chi-square tests and cross-tabulation analysis and uncovered a significant correlation between the rurality or urbanity of a county council member and the source of influence on important growth and development matters. The difference in the two groups is statistically significant and should be taken into consideration in developing both urban and rural public policy. The cross-tabulations suggest that in almost all instances the influence of organized citizen groups and one-to-one conversations decreases when an issue moves from routine to important matters and the importance of advisory boards increases, most dramatically among female council members. That said, the second research design did not unveil any data

that directly addressed Kettering's research question on the nature of the relationship between deliberative forums and community politics.

This research was inconclusive with the first approach unable to find a relationship between deliberative forums and community politics while the second research approach could not measure the influence of deliberative forums on local elected decision makers because they had not been exposed to the treatment (deliberative dialogue forums). However, this report may open up new avenues for future research. If proponents of the deliberative process wish to change the paradigm then it needs to become more inclusive by including those that have more influence on important matters – other council members, administrators and staff, and advisory councils. Unfortunately as was clearly demonstrated, obtaining elected official participation in the process is a significant hurdle. Therefore, influence may best be obtained by directing efforts towards the local government experts in the administration and on advisory boards.

## **Reflections**

### Research Reflections

The Kershaw County council member research approach did not produce any data regarding the relationship between deliberation and community politics. What it did reveal is the difficulty to work with elected officials on an unknown process in a difficult time. Like the growth forum conducted with the Dorchester County council in January, 2006, the November 2007 forums' expenses were paid for by the Laboratory. Unlike Kershaw County, five of the seven Dorchester County council members attended the one time growth forum. The lack of participation in Kershaw County only means that the study was inconclusive at that time and in that place, and that similar studies in other places should be attempted.

In the processes of developing and implementing the forums, the connection between deliberative democracy and local politics was highlighted. The connection was made at the introductory presentation to the county council in August 2007, at all three forums the connection was made within the presentations, and finally the connection was made in the final report. It is the researcher's belief that the nature of this connection is at the center of whether the deliberative democratic process succeeds or fails. In organic politics, citizens take some control of their lives in their community through participation in the process. Unfortunately, organic

politics is sporadic and usually issue driven. Citizens may be able to sometimes get an issue on the local agenda and to develop policy alternatives but have limited influence on policy decisions, especially on important matters. No organic political action was observed as a direct result of the Kershaw or Dorchester Counties' growth forums.

Instead, interest group and institutional politics were observed. In Kershaw County the lines had already been drawn between groups, the most notable being the entrenched pro growth group comprised of residential construction and realtor interests, the new anti sprawl and growth group, and the pragmatists and experts in the middle. Two of these three groups attended the forums – pro growth interests and middle ground pragmatists who held elected or staff positions in local government. The anti-sprawl interests never came to the table even though the forums were well publicized, conducted in neutral places by a neutral party (Clemson University), and were held on three different nights. Only one participant mentioned the promotion of environmental policies but did not indicate any specific individual or organized anti-growth concerns. As expected, the pro growth groups actively encouraged their membership to attend the forums and also to contact their local and state officials regarding specific growth and development matters. These groups also support members to run for local political office. In this community, Institutional politics may not always set the agenda but it does have significant influence on the development of policy alternatives and to mold political outcomes. Here, well organized pro growth interests control the “property rights” and organic or Populist politics don't have much of a direct chance to alter it.

As noted, the connection between deliberation and community politics is weak relying upon interest groups and one-to-one conversations about forum processes and results. Without attending a forum, council members cannot understand the thought process, emotions and trade-offs espoused by the citizenry. These attributes cannot be properly expressed in a report or in typical communication in order to be effective. Unfortunately, the first research project found great difficulty in getting elected officials to attend and understand the deliberative process; therefore they will not value the process as much. This pattern of weak communication of the deliberative process was also noted in last year's AARP project where the interest group did not

understand that the strength of the process lies in the first hand participation (sharing the community's emotions and thought processes on an issue).

The second research project found a strong correlation between a county council member's community characteristic (urban/rural) and the sources of influence on growth and development matters. In addition, the cross-tabulation analysis found a movement of influence from routine to important matters for different segments of the population. In some segments interest groups and one-to-one conversations held more influence on routine matters and their influence waned on important matters as council members relied more heavily upon experts (professional staff and advisory boards). Therefore, if the goal is to connect deliberative dialogue forums to community politics then perhaps an inclusionary approach that includes those experts should be encouraged. There may be a loss in pure citizen organic politics but the message might be delivered more efficiently.

### Organizational Reflections

The Laboratory for Deliberative Dialogue (LDD) is very fortunate to be part of Clemson University and the Institute for Community and Economic Development. The university has a well earned reputation that lends legitimacy to the Laboratory. The LDD is administratively supported by the university and programmatically supported by the Kettering Foundation and one of its grant making arms, the Council on Public Policy Education. At the end of this fiscal year the existing grant funds will cease and if the organization wishes to continue programmatically then other funds will be needed. The leadership of the LDD is currently 35% of an FTE (between 2 people, 10%/25%) and that should continue for a while. The leadership from the board has always been voluntary.

To sustain ourselves in the future the organization will have to have products that add value, and connections that provide a steady source of programmatic funds. Three potential products that can assist to sustain the organization, at least programmatically are: 1) charge organizations and communities to conduct a forum and provide a report; 2) substantially increase the quality and quantity of our training programs to increase costs and revenue; 3) provide moderator and forum development services to state and national organizations for a price (i.e.



AARP contract). However, these fiscal programmatic options do not address the personnel costs assigned to the university or the opportunity costs incurred by the co-directors. Is the provision of deliberative dialogue services the best use of time and talents? The answer is complicated depending on one's passion for deliberative democracy, how the process is directed and administered and the other options available.

In order for the Laboratory to sustain itself it must address internal challenges to its legitimacy. The leadership and administration of the LDD needs to command a greater share of personnel resources than is currently allocated. In addition, forums and training programs (PPI) must be developed and conducted with a higher level of professionalism. In order for the Laboratory to grow, forums should directly address local public policy issues, be revenue producing, demonstrate the value of the deliberative process to decision makers, and capture direct forum cause and effects on public policy.

The sustainability and possible growth of the Laboratory is also dependent on the network in which it performs. The Laboratory is housed at an academic institute that focuses on economic and community development issues. Therefore, our network is our home university and other members of the state's academic community. Major South Carolina universities are represented on the board of directors (University of South Carolina, Coastal Carolina University, South Carolina State University, Clemson University and previously Spartanburg Methodist College). The Laboratory's moderators come mainly from the co-directors and various board members, other universities or community groups. Three other groups play central networking roles with the Laboratory. Local governments and local government organizations are a large part of our network and consist of individual local governments (counties and municipalities) and their state organizations (SC Association of Counties & the Municipal Association of SC). The next network group is the federal government. The Laboratory has relationships with the Department of Defense, USDA/Rural Development and CSREES, the Southern Rural Development Center and the Southern Growth Policy Board. Finally, the Laboratory is networked to state government agencies including the Human Affairs Commission and the Department of Commerce.

Future network support for the Laboratory would mostly come from contract work outlined above. It is doubtful that other universities would contribute for personnel expenses but smaller amounts for programs could be sought. State government has experienced 6 years of a libertarian as governor. State funds are not available for the foreseeable future. Major potential contract for service projects would come from either federal agencies and associates, or local governments and their statewide organizations. Unfortunately, the Laboratory is not equipped or staffed to handle any significantly large contract from any of our current or future partners. The media plays a small role with the Laboratory on a project by project basis.

The greatest political insight from the research was that Pluralist political methods are a wonderful concept but they do not have much influence on the local decision making process. Organic politics may have some limited success at putting an issue on the agenda but have less influence with decision makers on important issues. For important issues the decision makers turn to the experts and to one another. Therefore, future programs should be more inclusive targeting both staff and advisory committees while not giving up on elected officials.

This research will be shared with the board of directors, university, federal and local government partners.

Appendix A

**KERSHAW COUNTY  
GROWTH FORUM REPORT  
NOVEMBER 8, 12 & 15, 2007**

**A report by:**

**William Molnar, AICP  
Co-director  
Laboratory for Deliberative Dialogue  
Clemson Institute for Economic and Community Development**



## Introduction

The Kershaw County Council and Clemson University's Laboratory for Deliberative Dialogue co-sponsored a series of three growth forums on November 8, 12 & 18, 2007.<sup>6</sup> The program was designed to conduct one forum in each incorporated municipality in the county. The forums were held on school district property (Bethune Elementary School, Stover Middle School and Camden Elementary School, respectively) and were moderately attended. Over twenty-three people attended the first forum in Bethune, twenty county residents attended the second forum in Elgin and thirty-one county residents attended the last forum in Camden. All told, approximately seventy to seventy-five Kershaw County residents attended the three forums. The events were well advertised by the county through print and radio announcements. A light dinner was served each evening.

All three forums were scheduled and held between 6:00 and 8:30 pm. Forum moderators and staff included Mr. William Molnar (Clemson University), Ms. Barbara Brown (Clemson University), Dr. Sheila Mulcahy Haney (League of Woman Voters), Mr. Dan Mackey (Clemson University) and Mr. Eric Tuttle (Clemson University – Student). The Clemson moderator and recorder teams used the National Issues Forum booklet A Nice Place to Live: Creating Communities, Fighting Sprawl<sup>7</sup> as a basis for discussion.

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<sup>6</sup> Financial support for the forums was provided by a grant from the Kettering Foundation

<sup>7</sup> National Issues Forums, [www.nifi.org](http://www.nifi.org)

Deliberative dialogue forums are non-partisan events that help people and communities to come together to reason, talk and listen – to deliberate about common problems and to search for common ground for action. The three values of deliberation are: (1) it is a dialogue for weighing pros and cons, not a debate for winning (**understanding**); (2) it is about what is most valuable to us, not just the facts alone (**values**); and, (3) it is about making choices together (**action**). The proposed purpose for the series of forums in Kershaw County was to provide better information on citizen sentiment towards growth to elected officials and other policymakers; to allow citizens to understand and participate in the discussion of this multi-faceted issue; and, to give citizens and elected officials a collective point to move growth and development policies forward.

### **Forum Process**

Mr. Molnar welcomed the participants; introduced the Clemson team; discussed the format for the evening as well as the ground rules for the deliberation. The attendees watched a short video on the three approaches to growth to be discussed; broke for a light dinner; then reconvened for an hour and a half discussion using the booklet and moderated by a member of the team. The three approaches discussed were:

- Fulfill the Suburban American Dream
- Strengthen Cities, Stop Sprawl at its Source
- Free Americans to Choose Lifestyles

Over the next 1½ hours the participants deliberated the issue of growth and development in Kershaw County. Their comments and concerns regarding each approach included views in favor and in opposition to each choice as well as actual and potential trade-offs. At the end of the deliberation, participants were asked to complete the post-forum questionnaire found at the end of their booklet. Fifty-four participants completed the survey and the results are detailed in the Questionnaire section of this report.

The remainder of this report includes the flip-chart comments from the three different forums; the post-forum questionnaire results and brief analysis; and a copy of the sign-in sheets.

### **Group Flip-chart Comments**

Town of Bethune Growth Forum  
Thursday, November 8, 2007

#### General Comments

- Family members who live in greater Atlanta experience traffic issues.
- Good quality schools are an issue in the suburbs.
- "I wouldn't want to live there."
- In the future, suburbia will come fast to Bethune, with route 1 access, growth will move from Elgin and Lugoff to Bethune.
- Development is going to come to Bethune from Columbia and Charlotte.
- The attendees had mixed feelings between keeping Bethune like it is and also wanting shopping and other amenities. They want to keep the rural characteristics ("Bethune is home") but also realize they need more of an economic base to improve the quality of life for them and their children.
- One important issue is retaining the youth in the community – there are no jobs.
- To some degree things are already changing with immigrants from "up north" moving in for the "small town feel" and lower land prices.
- Growth brings a downside as well – crime.
- The participants realize that there is a trade-off between the current small-town lifestyle and the need for change.

### Choice #1

- The area needs growth in single family homes.
- Fuel costs will impact where development goes.
- Bethune's population is decreasing.
- High and middle school children are bused to other parts of the district. The elementary school does not have the population to draw from.
- There is a need for growth on this side of the county.
- There should be some planning; the community needs to get more involved in policy decisions.

### Choice #2

- Specialized medical services are only found in Columbia.
- Strengthening cities will keep Bethune Rural.
- The growth of cities will limit rural political/policy power.
- We cannot do nothing!
- The Town needs more basic commercial services.
- The loss of industry begets the loss of commerce, begets the inability to attract new industry and housing.
- Is annexation an option for the Town to increase its population and participation?

### Choice #3

- Keep government away from some decisions.
- People don't like being overly regulated. "Don't regulate me but you can regulate my neighbor."
- Are we going to be able to sustain our way of life?
- We are willing to sacrifice. However, we object when we are not told why. We are willing to play by the rules if they are fair.
- There is a desire for planned growth.
- We need to demand more from our local officials.
- Bethune will become a suburb of Camden and Columbia in the future.
- We need more programs for kids to keep them away from crime.

Town of Elgin Growth Forum  
Monday, November 12, 2007

### General Comments

- Is sprawl bad?

- There is a need for a balanced growth plan that includes environmental and traffic issues

#### Choice #1

- With growth there is the issue of raising funds for schools, road, sewer, etc.
- A growing community needs suitable roads.
- How do you balance growth?
- Development is not going to stop and we need a better funding source for road improvements.
- Should everyone have access to owning their own single family home?

#### Choice #2

- There needs to be a concurrency system for growth.
- Can there be incentives for people to stay in the city?
- Perhaps there needs to be a balance of both choices #1 & #2.
- Technology influences both growth and population movement.
- A population shift is occurring in Kershaw County with more out-of-state residents moving in as well as folks moving from Columbia.
- Kershaw County is a “bedroom community” where people work in Columbia but reside in the county.
- The county has a high quality of life.
- Can the government require developers to build in accordance with master plans?

#### Choice #3

- What is the responsibility of the public and the private sectors?
- The government needs to set development guidelines.
- The county does not have the land needed for “master” planned communities.
- Is there a market for master planned communities in the county?
- Allowing unchecked development raises environmental and fiscal concerns. Bedroom communities have more difficulty raising revenue to support needed infrastructure.
- The process for development needs to be transparent.
- A recommendation that an advisory committee be formed to advise the council on long-range growth issues for the county.

City of Camden Growth Forum  
Thursday, November 15, 2007

#### Choice #1



- Concerns: County government considers, cost overwhelms
- Regional – COG, consolidated planning (city, county, waste treatment plan) – differs by community?
- Move growth from natural habitats.
- Isolated communities bolster the need for linkages (transport, etc.).
- Financial problem – services costly to county government; communities don't generate necessary taxes.
- Subdivision costs prohibitive and borne by homeowner; should profit bearer share cost?
- County government bears cost ultimately; these homeowners don't cover real service costs.
- Growth is hap-hazardous.
- Should suburbia residents control plan? How?
- Citizens need to be proactive, especially towards planning; planners relied upon by citizens to represent their interest.
- Incorporation in advance of development.
- Problem – downtown loses funds, the old and the poor aggregate in cities.

#### Choice #2

- Concentrate on existing structure/suburbs (ex. Columbia)
- The South Carolina legislature is the most restrictive in the U.S. This reality has created many problems such as: loss of "home rule;" unfunded mandates; "archaic" regulations in the areas of zoning, annexation, taxation and impact fee laws.
- In the W. Wateree (high growth area) if a new school is needed and everyone agrees to finance the school the local governments cannot raise the funds because of SC taxation laws. Most citizens are unaware of the impact of the new legislation.
- The new law distributes sales tax revenues based on a set formula (net population increase and inflation); nor can the school district or other local governments apply school impact fees.

#### Choice #3

- Concerns: The consequences of urban sprawl; there are many who desire to reside in a more urban community but the developers are not listening; developers here can't find property permitting larger urban developments; city planner suggests a grid plan to insure the proximity of infrastructure, no sewer capacity; existing residents pay for infrastructure; uncontrolled growth is the problem, balanced growth is needed.
- The community's youth are leaving for other areas.
- Environment – water availability is an issue (droughts); base tax structure (SC gov't) on harm to environment.
- Is high density a problem with new developments?

- Cross-county “residents” buy a home in Kershaw but work and shop in a different county. The sales and other taxes do not support local education.
- Personal and community values differ.
- Sprawl sells but be smart in development.
- Plans need to include green spaces.

### Post Forum Questionnaire Results

Fifty-four of the attendees completed the post-forum questionnaire. The survey asked participants five close-ended questions (with multiple parts) and an additional two open ended questions. The questions focus on individual values and local government policy.

Kershaw County Post Forum Questionnaire Results					
	Question	<i>Very Important</i>	<i>Somewhat Important</i>	<i>Not at All Important</i>	<i>Not Sure</i>
1.	<b>Principles on which livable communities might be based. How important do you think each one is?</b>				
a.	Public spending on schools, roads, and utilities should favor existing communities rather than new developments	56%	37%	2%	6%
b.	Americans should have the freedom to buy and build as they wish	30%	49%	13%	8%
c.	Strict laws should protect rural areas from unplanned growth	45%	38%	8%	9%
d.	People should be free to use their cars and not be pressured to use public transit	25%	50%	19%	6%
e.	People should be free to use their cars and not be pressured to use public transit	8%	42%	42%	8%
f.	The government should invest public funds in parks, community centers, and green spaces to improve the quality of life in the suburbs	56%	31%	7%	6%
	Question	<i>Strongly</i>	<i>Somewhat Strongly</i>	<i>Not at All</i>	<i>Not Sure</i>
2.	<b>Looking at the list in Question #1 again. How strongly is each principle actually reflected in our current policies?</b>				
a.	Public spending on schools, roads, and utilities should favor existing communities rather than new developments	32%	36%	26%	6%
b.	Americans should have the freedom to buy and build as they wish	28%	49%	19%	4%

c.	Strict laws should protect rural areas from unplanned growth	33%	33%	31%	4%
d.	People should be free to use their cars and not be pressured to use public transit	31%	35%	29%	4%
e.	People should be free to use their cars and not be pressured to use public transit	12%	20%	59%	10%
f.	The government should invest public funds in parks, community centers, and green spaces to improve the quality of life in the suburbs	29%	48%	17%	6%

<b>Kershaw County Post Forum Questionnaire Results</b>					
	Question	<i>Very Concerned</i>	<i>Somewhat Concerned</i>	<i>Not at All Concerned</i>	<i>Not Sure</i>
4.	<b>How concerned are you about the issues listed below?</b>				
a.	Individual citizens have too little power to control the spread of housing subdivisions and new malls	56%	37%	6%	2%
b.	Public spending policies tend to favor building new communities over improving old ones	48%	41%	7%	4%
c.	Unfounded fears about new growth threaten the rights of farmers and other property owners to sell their land	28%	44%	22%	6%
d.	Without strong controls, much of the green space that improves community life will disappear	49%	43%	4%	4%
e.	Restricting land for development increases the cost of housing	21%	43%	25%	11%
f.	There are too few incentives for developments to build in existing communities	37%	39%	15%	9%

	Question	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Not Sure</i>
6	<b>How do you feel about these approaches to making policy on livable communities?</b>			
a.	We should use tax money to improve older communities, EVEN IF this slows down growth in other areas where many people want to live	85%	11%	4%
b.	We should strictly limit development in rural areas, EVEN IF this pressures families to live in increasingly crowded urban areas	26%	51%	23%
c.	We should stop trying to plan where people can live, EVEN IF this means that many older, poorer neighborhoods would suffer	28%	68%	4%

In a separate question thirteen percent of respondents said that they are not at all certain what our public policy for improving communities should be; fifty-nine percent say that they have a general sense of what public policy should be; and,

twenty-eight percent have definite opinions on what growth and development public policies should be.

The questionnaire results are non-scientific, taken from a non-random group of concerned county citizens. However, they still provide interesting information on the community's attitude towards growth and development issues. Some of the more interesting results include:

- Although over half of the respondents (56%) believe that it is very important that policies favor existing communities over new developments, only one in three (32%) strongly believe that this principle is reflected in current policies.
- Eighty-three percent of respondents believe that it is very or somewhat important that policies be based upon strict laws to protect rural areas from unplanned growth. However, county respondents were evenly split (1/3, 1/3, 1/3) as to the principle's reflection in current policies. In rural Bethune two out of three (67%) respondents believe that this principle is strongly reflected in current policies, while in Elgin only 7% strongly believe so.
- Over half (56%) of the respondents believe that the principle of government investments to improve the quality of life in the county is very important. However, only half that number (29%) sees it reflected in current policies.
- Countywide 30% of respondents believe that the principle that "Americans should have the freedom to buy and build as they wish" is very important. However, this sentiment varies by community. In Bethune 47% of respondents believe that this principle is very important; in Elgin 33% believe it is very important; and, in Camden only 11% believe it is very important.

- In general, rural Bethune respondents have stronger feelings on the issue than respondents from suburban Elgin. In almost all closed end questions Bethune respondents rated questions very important, strongly or very concerned answers.
- As a county, respondents said that they are either very concerned or somewhat concerned on the list of issues listed in question #4. Only two questions (c. & e.) invoked significant “not at all concerned” responses – unfounded fears about new development on farmers and restrictions affecting an increase in the cost of housing. These questions revealed significant differences by community. In Bethune, over half (53%) of respondents are very concerned about the rights of farmers and other property owners to sell their land. In Elgin only one in five respondents was very concerned while three in five were somewhat concerned.
- In Camden, only 5% of respondents were very concerned that “restricting land for development increases the cost of housing,” while fully one in three (35%) were somewhat concerned.
- Overall and in Bethune and Camden almost nine of ten respondents were in favor using tax money to improve older communities even if it would slow down growth in other areas. Seventy-three percent of respondents in suburban Elgin were in favor of this approach.
- Half of the county respondents (51%) opposed strict limits on development in rural areas; in Elgin sixty-seven percent opposed strict development limitations; while in Camden only 26% opposed this limitations.

- Finally, sixty-eight percent of county respondents opposed stopping planning where people could live.

In addition to the close ended questions, the survey asked two open ended local questions regarding policy.

3. Are there any other principles that you think should guide public policy on livable communities?

- Government should be for the people, not self interest.
- Only to get involved and invite growth and be a part of what we believe.
- People need to make sure they are involved.
- People should be given the same opportunities we have been given.
- There needs to be an agreement on how the inevitable costs of growth are addressed.
- Government must find a way to operate "for profit." It must be accountable like a business. It must be transparent.
- We suffer from lack of cooperation between city of Camden & Kershaw Co. – this is costly. They should not have separate planning efforts but should unite and plan together.
- Low impact development.
- Protect natural resources.
- Establishing what is important in the make-up of the community values.
- Rural, prime agriculture, natural resources, etc. should be protected but the landowner must have incentives not to develop.

5. Do you have any other concerns about policy in this area?

- Government should more strictly enforce land use plan.
- There is a lack of political will to follow sound planning principles.
- Maintaining the character of our community.
- Since there has been no planning in the past 150 years – citizens are stoned – shocked – of resistant to "standards and restrictions" – crying need for better communication about why and alternatives if we allow uncontrolled sprawl to continue.
- Lack of policy.
- Capitalism vs. Democracy
- I feel that our local people need to ask more of our local officials.
- Unless there is a crisis – federal grants and loans should favor/be awarded to communities that make real efforts to reduce urban sprawl. Rural

areas/suburban areas must show how their planned developments impact existing/neighborhood communities.

- Put issues on the ballot.
- Balance is the critical need.

## **Conclusions**

Kershaw County is experiencing significant population growth, especially on its southern border with Richland County. Fast residential growth in Elgin and the unincorporated area of Lugoff are moving north along highway 1 and interstate highway 20 towards Camden. Growth brings both positive and negative attributes and is a concern for elected officials, policymakers, existing and new residents alike. The growth forums highlighted the different attitudes between the county's municipalities and demonstrated that future county growth policy cannot be a "one size fits all" response. Policymakers will need to understand and design land use and growth public policy that reflect these local differences.

The three growth forums conducted by Clemson's Laboratory for Deliberative Dialogue should be considered a starting point for Kershaw County to come together, discuss the difficult issues related to growth and development and move forward into action. As was pointed out in one forum, "growth is going to happen – the decision is whether to control it or let it control you."

Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to people of all ages, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital or family status and is an equal opportunity employer.

## Appendix B

### Kershaw County Council Land Use Questionnaire

I wish to thank each of you for your interest in the deliberative dialogue process and your participation in the associated research. The information provided will remain confidential on an individual basis. However, in order to compare pre to post-forum questionnaire results I will need to know your name and a few basic questions.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Years on the Council: \_\_\_\_\_  
Specific Profession: \_\_\_\_\_

Where do you consider yourself on the political spectrum? (circle)

Very Conservative    Conservative    Moderate    Liberal    Very Liberal

This pre-forum questionnaire will be followed by a similar post-forum questionnaire as well as a brief (30 minute) personal interview.

#### Pre-Forum Questionnaire

The focus of this survey is on Kershaw County growth and development issues.

1. What type of issues do you believe warrant community participation in problem solving? (please rank from 1 being the highest to 4 being the lowest)

- a. Neighborhood conflict (zoning, roads) \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Dividing issues (raising taxes) \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Consensus issues (homeless shelter) \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Long-range issues (econ. development) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Do you believe that you currently have adequate resources/tools to obtain public input?      Yes/No



If yes, what resources work best for you and your community? \_\_\_\_\_

What resources would you consider adding? \_\_\_\_\_

3. How do you usually hear the community's thoughts on a growth and development issue?

- |                             |        |
|-----------------------------|--------|
| a. Public hearing           | yes/no |
| b. Local media              | yes/no |
| c. Neighborhood meeting     | yes/no |
| d. Interest groups          | yes/no |
| e. One-to-one conversations | yes/no |
| f. Other _____              |        |

4. Who has the most influence to place and keep an important local growth or development issue on the public agenda? (please rank by placing a number 1 next to the most influential down to number 9 for the least influential)

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a. Council members                               | _____ |
| b. State representative or senator               | _____ |
| c. Chamber of Commerce and/or business community | _____ |
| d. County administration                         | _____ |
| e. Advisory boards                               | _____ |
| f. Local media (radio and print)                 | _____ |
| g. Organized citizen groups                      | _____ |
| h. Environmentalists                             | _____ |
| i. Other (describe)                              | _____ |

5. How much does each different group influence your decision on routine growth and development matters? (please circle)

1 highly influential; 2 influential; 3 not very influential; 4 least influential.

- |  |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| a. Other council members                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. State representative or senator             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. Individual developer                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| d. Prof. organization (homebuilders, realtors) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

e. Chamber of Commerce	1	2	3	4
f. County administration and staff	1	2	3	4
g. Advisor boards	1	2	3	4
h. Local radio and print media	1	2	3	4
i. Organized citizen groups	1	2	3	4
j. One-to-one citizen conversations	1	2	3	4

6. How much does each different group influence your decision on important growth and development matters? (please circle)

1 highly influential; 2 influential; 3 not very influential; 4 least influential.

a. Other council members	1	2	3	4
b. State representative or senator	1	2	3	4
c. Individual developer	1	2	3	4
d. Prof. organization (homebuilders, realtors)	1	2	3	4
e. Chamber of Commerce	1	2	3	4
f. County administration and staff	1	2	3	4
g. Advisor boards	1	2	3	4
h. Local radio and print media	1	2	3	4
i. Organized citizen groups	1	2	3	4
j. One-to-one citizen conversations	1	2	3	4

Thank you for your participation.

## Appendix C

### Kershaw County Council Land Use Questionnaire

I wish to thank each of you for your participation in the deliberative dialogue process and completion of the pre-forum questionnaire. The Public Issues Forum (PIF) and associated survey results will provide a wealth of information for the council, the county and Clemson University.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Best number to reach you to schedule the post-forum interview (30 minute)

\_\_\_\_\_

#### Post-Forum Questionnaire

1. After attending a Public Issues Forum, do you believe that you currently have adequate resources/tools to obtain public input? Yes/No
2. Do you believe that the public discussion (PIF) is different from your usual contact with the public in meetings? Yes/No

If yes, how? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If no, why not? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. If this kind of public deliberation was a regular part of the pattern of community decision making, how would you rank the following list? What communication process is more important for you to hear the community's thoughts on a growth and development issue? (please rank from 1 being the highest to 7 being the lowest)

a. Public hearing \_\_\_\_\_

b. Local media \_\_\_\_\_

- c. Neighborhood meeting \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Interest groups \_\_\_\_\_
- e. One-to-one conversations \_\_\_\_\_
- f. Public Issues Forum \_\_\_\_\_
- g. Other \_\_\_\_\_

4. What are the three most important things you heard during the deliberation(s)?

- a. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. How will you use what you heard during the forum when considering land use policy? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Who has the most influence to place and keep an important local growth or development issue on the public agenda? (please rank by placing a number 1 next to the most influential down to number 9 for the least influential)

- j. Council members \_\_\_\_\_
- k. State representative or senator \_\_\_\_\_
- l. Chamber of Commerce and/or business community \_\_\_\_\_
- m. County administration \_\_\_\_\_
- n. Advisory boards \_\_\_\_\_
- o. Local media (radio and print) \_\_\_\_\_
- p. Organized citizen groups \_\_\_\_\_
- q. Environmentalists \_\_\_\_\_
- r. Other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_

7. How much does each different group influence your decision on routine growth and development matters? (please circle)

1 highly influential; 2 influential; 3 not very influential; 4 least influential.

k. Other council members	1	2	3	4
l. State representative or senator	1	2	3	4
m. Individual developer	1	2	3	4
n. Prof. organization (homebuilders, realtors)	1	2	3	4
o. Chamber of Commerce	1	2	3	4
p. County administration and staff	1	2	3	4
q. Advisor boards	1	2	3	4
r. Local radio and print media	1	2	3	4
s. Organized citizen groups	1	2	3	4
t. One-to-one citizen conversations	1	2	3	4

8. How much does each different group influence your decision on important growth and development matters? (please circle)

1 highly influential; 2 influential; 3 not very influential; 4 least influential.

k. Other council members	1	2	3	4
l. State representative or senator	1	2	3	4
m. Individual developer	1	2	3	4
n. Prof. organization (homebuilders, realtors)	1	2	3	4
o. Chamber of Commerce	1	2	3	4
p. County administration and staff	1	2	3	4
q. Advisor boards	1	2	3	4
r. Local radio and print media	1	2	3	4
s. Organized citizen groups	1	2	3	4
t. One-to-one citizen conversations	1	2	3	4

9. How would you rank the legitimacy of what you heard during the Public Issues Forum?

1      2      3      4

1 highly legitimate; 2 legitimate; 3 not very legitimate; 4 least legitimate

10. What would you need to hear for the results of a Public Issues Forum to influence your decision-making on policy issues? \_\_\_\_\_

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Thank you for your participation.

## **Appendix D**

### **2007 LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS SURVEY CLEMSON INSTITUTE FOR ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY REPORT**

#### **Background**

In order to measure the sources of influence for the decisions that South Carolina county council members make concerning growth and development matters, the Clemson Institute for Economic and Community Development contracted with the Survey Research Laboratory (SRL) of University of South Carolina's Institute for Public Service and Policy Research to conduct a telephone survey of a sample of county council members.

#### **Questionnaire Design**

The substantive questions in the survey were constructed by the Clemson Institute for Economic and Community Development staff with the assistance of the SRL staff. The demographic questions and other technical aspects of the questionnaire are the responsibility of the SRL staff.

#### **Sampling**

The respondents to be interviewed for this survey were selected from a random sample of county council members extracted from the 2007 Directory of County Officials published by the South Carolina Association of Counties. A total of 218 county council numbers were called by the survey interviewers.

#### **Interviewing**

The interviewing was conducted by the interviewing staff of the Institute for Public Service and Policy Research. Prior to the actual fieldwork (interviewing), the interviewers and interviewing supervisors received one day of specialized training for this survey. The interviewing was conducted from the Institute's offices on the University of South Carolina Columbia campus. Many

of the interviews were monitored to insure that instructions were being followed. Calls were made from 9:00 AM to 9:30 PM Monday through Friday, from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM on Saturday, and 3:00 PM to 8:00 PM on Sunday. The main survey period was from November 11, 2007 to January 2, 2008. A total of 128 fully completed interviews were conducted. The response rate for this survey was 58.5%,

Interviews were conducted using the Institute's computer-aided telephone interviewing facilities. After the interviews were completed, the open-ended questions were coded. Following this coding, analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

### **Sampling Error**

This survey, like all surveys, has a potential for sampling error due to the fact that not all county council members in South Carolina were interviewed. A sample of 218 from a total of 337 county council members was selected. Based on the total population and the sample size, the potential for error is +/- 3.95%. Results for questions answered by significantly fewer than 128 respondents and results for subgroups of the population have a potential for larger variation than those for the entire sample.



## SUMMARY RESULTS

### Measuring Influence

Respondents were asked two questions concerning the sources that influence the decisions that they make concerning both routine and important growth and development matters. Before being asked the specific questions, respondents were read the following introduction:

"My next questions are about how you make decisions about growth and development issues. I am going to read a list of different groups that can influence the decisions that elected officials make. After I read the list, I will ask you which **THREE** of these groups most often have influence in making your decisions. The groups are: other council members; state representative or senator; individual developer; professional organization such as homebuilders or realtors; Chamber of Commerce; County administration and staff; advisory boards; local radio and print media; organized citizen groups; and one-to-one citizen conversations."

They were then asked the following two questions:

"Which **THREE** groups influence you the most in making your decision on **ROUTINE** growth and development matters? (READ LIST IF NECESSARY)

1. Other council members,
2. State representative or senator,
3. Individual developer,
4. Professional organization such as homebuilders or realtors,
5. Chamber of Commerce,
6. County administration and staff,
7. Advisory boards,
8. Local radio and print media,
9. Organized citizen groups,
10. One-to-one citizen conversations."

"Which **THREE** of these groups influence you the most in making your decision on **IMPORTANT** growth and development matters? (READ LIST IF NEEDED)

1. Other council members,
2. State representative or senator,
3. Individual developer,
4. Professional organization such as homebuilders or realtors,
5. Chamber of Commerce,
6. County administration and staff,

7. Advisory boards,
8. Local radio and print media,
9. Organized citizen groups,
10. One-to-one citizen conversations.”

### **Sources of Influence on Routine Growth and Development Matters**

When the three possible responses to the question concerning the sources of influence used by county council members when making decisions on routine growth and development matters are combined, the five most frequently mentioned sources of influence were: “County Administration” (67); “Other Council Members” (62); “Organized Citizen Groups” (49); “One to One Citizen Conversations” (42); and “Advisory Boards” (36). A complete listing of the frequency with which each of the 10 sources of influence on routine growth and development matters is listed below.

<u>SOURCE</u>	<u>N</u>
County Administration	67
Other Council Members	62
Organized Citizen Groups	49
One to One Citizen Conversations	42
Advisory Boards	36
State Representative or Senator	24
Chamber of Commerce	24
Individual Developer	21
Professional Organization	21
Local Radio and Print Media	3
TOTAL	350*

(\*NOTE: The total number of responses is greater than the number of respondents because respondents were asked to list the top three sources of influence on the decisions they make about routine growth and development matters.)

Table 1 shows a comparison of the number of responses for each of the 10 potential sources of influence between county council members from urban counties and county council members from rural counties. Table 2 provides a similar comparison based on geographic region of the state. Table 3 shows differences in the frequency with which each source of influence based on the race of the respondent. Table 4 provides a comparison based on the sex of the

respondent. Each table shows the frequency of the response, the total number of times that response was given, and the total number of responses.

TABLE 1  
SOURCE OF INFLUENCE FOR ROUTINE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT MATTERS –  
BY URBAN/RURAL COUNTY\*

<u>SOURCE</u>	<u>URBAN</u>	<u>RURAL</u>	<u>N</u>
County Administration	41	26	67
Other Council Members	35	27	62
Organized Citizen Groups	33	16	49
One to One Citizen Conversations	28	14	42
Advisory Boards	19	17	36
State Representative or Senator	9	15	24
Chamber of Commerce	7	17	24
Individual Developer	12	9	21
Professional Organization	11	10	21
Local Radio and Print Media	2	1	3
TOTAL	197	152	349

\* Urban counties have a population  $\geq 50,000$ ; Rural counties have a population  $< 50,000$   
(Among respondents to this question, 75 were from urban counties and 53 were from rural counties.)

TABLE 2  
SOURCE OF INFLUENCE FOR ROUTINE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT MATTERS –  
BY REGION\*

<u>SOURCE</u>	<u>UPSTATE</u>	<u>MIDLANDS</u>	<u>LOWCOUNTRY</u>	<u>N</u>
County Administration	21	30	16	67
Other Council Members	25	22	15	62
Organized Citizen Groups	18	18	13	49
One to One Citizen Conversations	14	17	11	42
Advisory Boards	10	14	12	36
State Representative or Senator	5	10	9	24
Chamber of Commerce	9	12	3	24
Individual Developer	10	9	2	21
Professional Organization	11	5	5	21
Local Radio and Print Media	1	0	2	3
TOTAL	124	137	88	349

\* For a listing of counties in each region see Appendix A.  
(Among respondents to this question, 45 were from the Upstate, 49 were from the Midlands, and 30 were from the Lowcountry.)

TABLE 3  
SOURCES OF INFLUENCE FOR ROUTINE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT MATTERS –  
BY RACE

<u>SOURCE</u>	<u>BLACK</u>	<u>WHITE</u>	<u>N</u>
County Administration	21	45	66
Other Council Members	16	44	60
Organized Citizen Groups	17	31	48
One to One Citizen Conversations	12	29	41
Advisory Boards	14	21	35
State Representative or Senator	11	13	24
Chamber of Commerce	10	13	23
Individual Developer	4	16	20
Professional Organization	6	14	20
Local Radio and Print Media	1	2	3
TOTAL	112	228	340

(Among respondents to this question, 41 were black and 84 were white.)

TABLE 4  
SOURCES OF INFLUENCE FOR ROUTINE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT MATTERS –  
BY SEX

<u>SOURCE</u>	<u>MALE</u>	<u>FEMALE</u>	<u>N</u>
County Administration	55	12	67
Other Council Members	57	5	62
Organized Citizen Groups	39	10	49
One to One Citizen Conversations	34	8	42
Advisory Boards	32	4	36
State Representative or Senator	22	2	24
Chamber of Commerce	21	3	24
Individual Developer	20	1	21
Professional Organization	17	4	21
Local Radio and Print Media	3	0	3
TOTAL	300	49	349

(Among respondents to this question, 109 were male and 19 were female.)

When the responses are compared based on the order in which each respondent listed the sources that influence their decisions on routine growth and development matters, “Other Council Members” was the most frequent response (mentioned as first by 38 county council members,). This was followed by “Organized Citizen Groups” (22); “County Administration” (20); and “One to One Citizen Conversations” (17). The second source of influence that most frequently mentioned were “County Administration” (26); “Organized Citizen Groups” (16); “Other Council Members” (15); “Chamber of Commerce,” “One to One Citizen Conversations” and “Advisory Boards” (each mentioned by 11 respondents). The sources of influence that were most frequently mentioned as the third source were “County Administration” (21); “Advisory Boards” (18), “One to One Citizen Conversations” (14), “Organized Citizen Groups” (11); and “Individual Developer” (10). Table 5 provides a complete listing of each source of influence by the order in which it was listed and the frequency with which it was mentioned.

TABLE 5

FIRST SOURCE OF INFLUENCE ON  
ROUTINE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT MATTERS

<u>SOURCE</u>	<u>N</u>
Other Council Members	38
Organized Citizen Groups	22
County Administration	20
One to One Citizen Conversations	17
Advisory Boards	7
Professional Organization	6
State Representative or Senator	6
Chamber of Commerce	5
Individual Developer	3
Local Radio and Print Media	0
TOTAL	128

SECOND SOURCE OF INFLUENCE ON  
ROUTINE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT MATTERS

<u>SOURCE</u>	<u>N</u>
County Administration	26
Organized Citizen Groups	16
Other Council Members	15
Chamber of Commerce	11

Advisory Boards	11
One to One Citizen Conversations	11
State Representative or Senator	9
Professional Organization	9
Individual Developer	8
Local Radio and Print Media	1
TOTAL	117

### THIRD SOURCE OF INFLUENCE ON ROUTINE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT MATTERS

<u>SOURCE</u>	<u>N</u>
County Administration	21
Advisory Boards	18
One to One Citizen Conversations	14
Organized Citizen Groups	11
Individual Developer	10
Other Council Members	9
State Representative or Senator	9
Chamber of Commerce	8
Professional Organization	6
Local Radio and Print Media	2
TOTAL	108

### Sources of Influence on Important Growth and Development Matters

The next question asked respondents to list the three sources of influence on the decisions they make about important growth and development matters were. When the total responses are combined, both “Other Council Members” and “County Administration” were both mentioned by 61 respondents. The other top three sources of influence were “Advisory Boards” (39); “Organized Citizen Groups” (33); and “One to One Citizen Conversations” (32). A complete listing of the frequency with which each of the 10 sources of influence on important growth and development matters is provided below.

<u>SOURCE</u>	<u>N</u>
Other Council Members	61
County Administration	61
Advisory Boards	39
Organized Citizen Groups	33
One to One Citizen Conversations	32
State Representative or Senator	23

Chamber of Commerce	21
Individual Developer	19
Professional Organization	19
Local Radio and Print Media	2
TOTAL	310

Among the sources of influence on important growth and development matters that were listed first, “Other Council Members” was the most frequent response (mentioned by 36 county council members). This was followed by “County Administration” (22); “One to One Citizen Conversations” (16); “Advisory Boards” (13); and “Organized Citizen Groups” (12). Among the most frequently listed sources of influence that were identified as the second source were “Organized Citizen Groups” (17); “County Administration” (16); “Other Council Members” (15), “Advisory Boards (14); and “Chamber of Commerce” (11). Mentioned as the third most frequent source of influence on important growth and development issues was “County Administration” (23). This was followed by “Advisory Boards” and “One to One Citizen Conversations” (both mentioned by 12 respondents) and “Other Council Members” and “Professional Organization” (both mentioned by 10 respondents).

Table 6 shows a comparison of the number of responses for each of the 10 potential sources of influence between county council members from urban counties and county council members from rural counties. Table 7 provides a similar comparison based on geographic region of the state. Table 8 shows differences in the frequency with which each source of influence based on the race of the respondent. Table 9 provides a comparison based on the sex of the respondent. Each table shows the frequency of the response, the total number of times that response was given, and the total number of responses.

TABLE 6  
SOURCE OF INFLUENCE FOR IMPORTANT GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT MATTERS –  
BY URBAN/RURAL COUNTY\*

<u>SOURCE</u>	<u>URBAN</u>	<u>RURAL</u>	<u>N</u>
Other Council Members	35	26	61
County Administration	38	23	61
Advisory Boards	18	21	39
Organized Citizen Groups	22	11	33
One to One Citizen Conversations	22	10	32
State Representative or Senator	5	18	23
Chamber of Commerce	7	14	21
Individual Developer	10	9	19
Professional Organization	11	8	19
Local Radio and Print Media	2	0	2
TOTAL	170	140	310

\* Urban counties have a population  $\geq 50,000$ ; Rural counties have a population  $< 50,000$   
(Among respondents to this question, 75 were from urban counties and 53 were from rural counties.)

TABLE 7  
SOURCE OF INFLUENCE FOR IMPORTANT GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT MATTERS –  
BY REGION\*

<u>SOURCE</u>	<u>UPSTATE</u>	<u>MIDLANDS</u>	<u>LOWCOUNTRY</u>	<u>N</u>
Other Council Members	25	17	19	61
County Administration	20	27	14	61
Advisory Boards	13	17	9	39
Organized Citizen Groups	10	13	10	33
One to One Citizen Conversations	11	15	6	32
State Representative or Senator	5	11	7	23
Chamber of Commerce	6	10	5	21
Individual Developer	9	9	1	19
Professional Organization	7	9	3	19
Local Radio and Print Media	0	0	2	2
TOTAL	106	128	76	310

\* For a listing of counties in each region see Appendix A.  
(Among respondents to this question, 45 were from the Upstate, 49 were from the Midlands, and 30 were from the Lowcountry.)



TABLE 8  
SOURCES OF INFLUENCE FOR IMPORTANT GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT MATTERS –  
BY RACE

<u>SOURCE</u>	<u>BLACK</u>	<u>WHITE</u>	<u>N</u>
Other Council Members	22	39	61
County Administration	22	38	60
Advisory Boards	14	23	37
Organized Citizen Groups	9	23	32
One to One Citizen Conversations	8	23	31
State Representative or Senator	10	13	23
Professional Organization	4	15	19
Individual Developer	4	15	19
Chamber of Commerce	8	12	20
Local Radio and Print Media	1	1	2
TOTAL	102	202	304

(Among respondents to this question, 41 were black and 84 were white.)

TABLE 9  
SOURCES OF INFLUENCE FOR IMPORTANT GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT MATTERS –  
BY SEX

<u>SOURCE</u>	<u>MALE</u>	<u>FEMALE</u>	<u>N</u>
Other Council Members	54	7	61
County Administration	51	10	61
Advisory Boards	36	3	39
Organized Citizen Groups	29	4	33
One to One Citizen Conversations	24	8	32
State Representative or Senator	21	2	23
Chamber of Commerce	18	3	21
Individual Developer	18	1	19
Professional Organization	18	1	19
Local Radio and Print Media	2	0	2
TOTAL	271	39	310

(Among respondents to this question, 109 were male and 19 were female.)

When the responses are compared based on the order in which each respondent listed the sources that influence their decisions on important growth and development matters, “Other Council Members” was the most frequent response (mentioned as first by 36 county council members,). This was followed by “County Administration” (22); “One to One Citizen Conversations” (16); “Advisory Boards (13); and “Organized Citizen Groups” (12). The second source of influence that most frequently mentioned were: “Organized Citizen Groups” (17); followed closely by “County Administration” (16); “Other Council Members” (15); “Advisory Boards” (14); and “Chamber of Commerce” (11). The sources of influence that were most frequently mentioned as the third source were: “County Administration” (23); “Advisory Boards” and “One to One Citizen Conversations” both being mentioned by 12 county council members and “Other Council Members” and “Professional Organization,” both receiving 10 mentions. Table 10 provides a complete listing of each source of influence on important growth and development matters by the order in which it was listed and the frequency with which it was mentioned.

TABLE 10

FIRST SOURCE OF INFLUENCE ON  
IMPORTANT GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT MATTERS

<u>SOURCE</u>	<u>N</u>
Other Council Members	36
County Administration	22
One to One Citizen Conversations	16
Advisory Boards	13
Organized Citizen Groups	12
State Representative or Senator	9
Individual Developer	7
Chamber of Commerce	4
Professional Organization	2
Local Radio and Print Media	1
TOTAL	128

SECOND SOURCE OF INFLUENCE ON  
IMPORTANT GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT MATTERS

<u>SOURCE</u>	<u>N</u>
Organized Citizen Groups	17

County Administration	16
Other Council Members	15
Advisory Boards	14
Chamber of Commerce	11
Individual Developer	9
State Representative or Senator	7
Professional Organization	7
One to One Citizen Conversations	4
Local Radio and Print Media	1
TOTAL	101

THIRD SOURCE OF INFLUENCE ON  
IMPORTANT GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT MATTERS

<u>SOURCE</u>	<u>N</u>
County Administration	23
Advisory Boards	12
One to One Citizen Conversations	12
Other Council Members	10
Professional Organization	10
State Representative or Senator	7
Chamber of Commerce	6
Organized Citizen Groups	4
Individual Developer	3
Local Radio and Print Media	0
TOTAL	87

## APPENDIX A

### Counties Used in Regional Analyses

<u>Upstate</u>	<u>Midlands</u>	<u>Lowcountry</u>
Abbeville	Aiken	Beaufort
Anderson	Allendale	Berkeley
Cherokee	Bamberg	Charleston
Chester	Barnwell	Colleton
Fairfield	Calhoun	Dillon
Greenville	Clarendon	Dorchester
Greenwood	Chesterfield	Florence
Lancaster	Darlington	Georgetown
Laurens	Edgefield	Hampton
Newberry	Kershaw	Horry
Oconee	Lee	Jasper
Pickens	Lexington	Marion
Spartanburg	Marlboro	Williamsburg
Union	McCormick	
York	Orangeburg	
	Richland	
	Saluda	
	Sumter	

Table 11

2007 Local Elected Officials Survey

Source of Influence on Routine & Important Growth and Development Matters

	Routine Growth	Important Growth
County Administration	19.1%	19.7%
Other Council Members	17.7%	19.7%
Organized Citizen Groups	14.0%	10.7%
1 to 1 Citizen Conversations	12.0%	10.3%
Advisory Boards	10.3%	12.6%
State Rep.or Senator	6.9%	7.4%
Chamber of Commerce	6.9%	6.8%
Individual Developer	6.0%	6.1%
Professional Organization	6.0%	6.1%
Local Media	0.9%	0.7%
Respondents were asked to choose their top 3 influences. The potential for error +/- 3.95%		
Routine Growth responses - 350; Important Growth responses - 310.		

Table 12

## Source of Influence on Routine &amp; Important Growth and Development Matters by Urban/Rural

	Routine Growth Urban	Important Growth Urban	Routine Growth Rural	Important Growth Rural
County Administration	20.8%	22.4%	17.1%	16.4%
Other Council Members	17.8%	20.6%	17.8%	18.6%
Organized Citizen Groups	16.8%	12.9%	10.5%	7.9%
1 to 1 Citizen Conversations	14.2%	12.9%	9.2%	7.1%
Advisory Boards	9.6%	10.6%	11.2%	15.0%
State Rep.or				
Senator	4.6%	2.9%	9.9%	12.9%
Chamber of Commerce	3.6%	4.1%	11.2%	10.0%
Individual				
Developer	6.1%	5.9%	5.4%	6.4%
Professional Organization	5.6%	6.5%	6.6%	5.7%

Urban respondents - 75; Rural respondents – 53

## Source of Influence on Routine &amp; Important Growth and Development Matters by Urban/Rural

	Routine Growth Urban	Routine Growth Rural	Important Growth Urban	Important Growth Rural	
County Administration	20.8%	17.1%	22.4%	16.4%	*
Other Council Members	17.8%	17.8%	20.6%	18.6%	
Organized Citizen Groups	16.8%	10.5%	12.9%	7.9%	*
1 to 1 Citizen Conversations	14.2%	9.2%	12.9%	7.1%	*
Advisory Boards	9.6%	11.2%	10.6%	15.0%	*
State Rep.or					
Senator	4.6%	9.9%	2.9%	12.9%	**
Chamber of Commerce	3.6%	11.2%	4.1%	10.0%	*
Individual					
Developer	6.1%	5.4%	5.9%	6.4%	
Professional Organization	5.6%	6.6%	6.5%	5.7%	
Local media			1.2%	0.0%	

Urban respondents - 75; Rural respondents – 53

Table 13

Source of Influence on Routine & Important Growth and Development Matters by Race

	Routine Growth Black	Important Growth Black		Routine Growth White	Important Growth White
County Administration	18.8%	21.6%		19.7%	18.8%
Other Council Members	14.3%	21.6%	*	19.3%	19.3%
Organized Citizen Groups	15.2%	8.8%	*	13.6%	11.4%
1 to 1 Citizen Conversations	10.7%	7.8%		12.7%	11.4%
Advisory Boards	12.5%	13.7%		9.2%	11.4%
State Rep.or Senator	9.8%	9.8%		5.7%	6.4%
Chamber of Commerce	8.9%	7.8%		5.7%	5.9%
Individual Developer	3.6%	3.9%		7.0%	7.4%
Professional Organization	5.4%	3.9%		6.1%	7.4%

Black respondents - 41; White respondents – 84

Source of Influence on Routine & Important Growth and Development Matters by Race

	Routine Growth Black	Routine Growth White		Important Growth Black	Important Growth White
County Administration	18.8%	19.7%		21.6%	18.8%
Other Council Members	14.3%	19.3%	*	21.6%	19.3%
Organized Citizen Groups	15.2%	13.6%		8.8%	11.4%
1 to 1 Citizen Conversations	10.7%	12.7%		7.8%	11.4%
Advisory Boards	12.5%	9.2%		13.7%	11.4%
State Rep.or Senator	9.8%	5.7%	*	9.8%	6.4%
Chamber of Commerce	8.9%	5.7%		7.8%	5.9%
Individual Developer	3.6%	7.0%		3.9%	7.4%
Professional Organization	5.4%	6.1%		3.9%	7.4%

Black respondents - 41; White respondents – 84

Table 14

## Source of Influence on Routine &amp; Important Growth and Development Matters by Sex

	Routine Growth Men	Important Growth Men		Routine Growth Women	Important Growth Women	
County Administration	18.3%	19.9%		24.5%	18.0%	*
Other Council Members	19.0%	18.8%		10.2%	25.6%	*
Organized Citizen Groups	13.0%	13.3%		20.4%	7.7%	*
1 to 1 Citizen Conversations	11.3%	10.7%		16.3%	10.3%	*
Advisory Boards	10.7%	8.9%		8.2%	20.5%	*
State Rep.or						
Senator	7.3%	7.8%		4.1%	5.1%	
Chamber of Commerce	7.0%	6.6%		6.1%	7.7%	
Individual						
Developer	6.7%	6.6%		2.0%	2.6%	
Professional Organization	5.7%	6.6%		8.2%	2.6%	*
Local Media				0.0%	0.0%	
Male respondents - 109; Female respondents - 19						

## Source of Influence on Routine &amp; Important Growth and Development Matters by Sex

	Routine Growth Men	Routine Growth Women		Important Growth Men	Important Growth Women	
County Administration	18.3%	24.5%	*	19.9%	18.0%	
Other Council Members	19.0%	10.2%	*	18.8%	25.6%	*
Organized Citizen Groups	13.0%	20.4%	*	13.3%	7.7%	*
1 to 1 Citizen Conversations	11.3%	16.3%	*	10.7%	10.3%	*
Advisory Boards	10.7%	8.2%		8.9%	20.5%	*
State Rep.or						
Senator	7.3%	4.1%		7.8%	5.1%	
Chamber of Commerce	7.0%	6.1%		6.6%	7.7%	
Individual						
Developer	6.7%	2.0%	*	6.6%	2.6%	*
Professional Organization	5.7%	8.2%		6.6%	2.6%	*
Local Media				0.7%	0.0%	
Male respondents - 109; Female respondents - 19						



# **Appendix I**

**SOUTH CAROLINA STATE SURVEY**

**FALL 2008**

**SUMMARY FINDINGS FOR THE**

**CLEMSON INSTITUTE FOR ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

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## **Background**

THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE SURVEY is a cost-shared random probability survey of citizens age eighteen and older living in the State of South Carolina that is conducted biannually by the University of South Carolina's Institute for Public Service and Policy Research. The South Carolina State Survey allows policy makers, researchers, and other interested organizations an opportunity to gather reliable data in a timely and cost-effective manner.

### **Questionnaire Design**

The substantive questions in the survey are constructed by the participating groups with the assistance of the South Carolina State Survey staff. The demographic questions and other technical aspects of the questionnaire are the responsibility of the South Carolina State Survey staff.

Before the questionnaire was finalized it was pretested to determine whether or not the questions could be easily understood by respondents, if the order of the questions seemed logical to the interviewers and respondents, or if it contained other identifiable weaknesses. Problems were detected and corrected. No major problems persisted into the actual conduct of the survey.

### **Sampling**

A dual sampling frame approach, one based on landline telephone exchanges and the second based on cell phone telephone numbers, was used in selecting respondents for this study. For the landline component, respondents to be interviewed were selected from a random sample of households with telephones in the State. Respondents in the cell phone sample were randomly selected from a list of cell phone exchanges in South Carolina. Each of these numbers was called

by the survey interviewers. Numbers that were found to be businesses, institutions, not-in-service, or otherwise not assigned were ineligible for the survey. The remaining numbers, when called, resulted in contacts to residences in the landline component and with individuals in the cell phone component. When contact was made with a residence in the land-line component, a respondent, 18 years of age or older, was randomly chosen from the household's occupants. When contact was made with an individual in the cell phone component, they were asked a series of questions to determine eligibility, including confirming that the number reached was for a cell phone, that the individual who answered was 18 years of age or older, and that they were a resident of South Carolina.

To avoid biasing the sample in favor of households that can be reached on multiple landline telephone numbers, each case from the landline sample was weighted inversely to its probability of being included in the sample and adjusted for differences in probability of selection due to the number of individuals age 18 or older living in the household. The data are also weighted to correct any potential biases in the sample on the basis of age, race, and sex (see the Appendix, Note 1).

### **Interviewing**

The interviewing was conducted by the interviewing staff of the Institute for Public Service and Policy Research. Prior to the actual fieldwork (interviewing), the interviewers and interviewing supervisors received one day of specialized training for this survey. The interviewing was conducted from the Institute's offices on the University of South Carolina Columbia campus. Many of the interviews were monitored to insure that instructions were being followed. Calls were made from 9:00 AM to 9:30 PM Monday through Friday, from 10:00 AM

to 4:00 PM on Saturday, and 3:00 PM to 8:00 PM on Sunday. The main survey period was from November 6 to December 10, 2008. In the landline component of this study, a total of 686 fully completed interviews and 36 partially completed interviews were conducted, while the cell phone component consisted of 140 completed interviews and two partially completed interviews. The response rate for the land-line component was 39.4% and for the cell phone component it was 25.2%. The overall response rate was 36.2%.

Interviews were conducted using the Institute's computer-aided telephone interviewing facilities. After the interviews were completed, the open-ended questions were coded. Following this coding, analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Organizations participating in this survey receive the frequency counts for their questions and cross-tabulations of these questions with seven demographic items.

### **Sampling Error**

The South Carolina State Survey, like all surveys, has a potential for sampling error due to the fact that not all residents of the state were interviewed. For all questions that were answered by eight hundred (800) or so respondents the potential for error is +/- 3.5%. Results for questions answered by significantly fewer than 800 respondents and results for subgroups of the population have a potential for larger variation than those for the entire sample.

### **Summary findings for the Clemson Institute for Economic and Community Development**

Respondents to the fall 2008 state survey were asked a series of questions to gauge their perceptions of the degree to which various groups' influence the decisions that elected officials make about growth and development issues. The groups included: council members; state representative or senator; individual developers; professional organizations; chamber of commerce; county administration and staff; advisory boards; local radio and print media; organized citizen groups; and individual citizens. Respondents were asked how much influence they thought that each of these groups has in making decisions about growth and development matters in their community. The response categories were: a great deal of influence; some influence; not much influence; or no influence.

### **Overall Perception of Influence Among Groups Identified in Survey**

Overall, 48.3% respondents felt that the state representative or senator was most likely to have a great deal of influence over growth and development matters in their community. County council was viewed as the next group to have a great deal of influence with 40.5% of respondents sharing this opinion. The next highest group was county administration and staff who 36.3% of respondents felt that had a great deal of influence over growth and development issues in their community. Organized citizen groups (18.3%), advisory boards (17.8%), and individual citizens (16.9%) were the groups respondents felt were least likely to exert a great deal of influence over these decisions. Table 1 provides the overall responses for each of the groups. There were several significant differences among respondents to each of these questions based on demographic characteristics.

TABLE 1  
INFLUENCE OF VARIOUS ACTORS

	<u>Great deal</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Not much</u>	<u>None</u>
State Representative or Senator	48.3%	33.4%	13.2%	5.0%
County Council	40.5%	42.7%	12.6%	4.2%
County Administration and Staff	36.3%	43.5%	16.1%	4.2%
Professional Organizations	31.3%	46.9%	16.8%	5.1%
Chamber of Commerce	30.8%	49.9%	14.8%	4.6%
Individual Developers	29.0%	48.8%	17.8%	4.4%
Local Radio and Print Media	27.7%	41.5%	21.7%	9.1%
Organized Citizen Groups	18.3%	49.1%	25.1%	7.6%
Advisory Boards	17.8%	59.2%	17.8%	5.2%
Individual Citizens	16.9%	36.3%	36.7%	10.2%



## **Influence of Council Members**

The first group respondents were asked about was council members. Overall, 40.5% indicated they felt that other council members exerted a great deal of influence and 42.7% indicated they felt that they exerted some influence. There were some statistically differences among the demographic groups. Female respondents were more likely to say council had either a great deal or some influence (86.3%) while 79.8% of male respondents shared this opinion. Male respondents were more likely to report that council members did not have much influence (16.0% of males compared to 9.5% of females) and similar percentages felt they had no influence (4.2% of males and 4.1% of females). White respondents (84.0%) were more likely than black respondents (81.8%) to respond that council members had either a great deal or some influence over these decisions. Black respondents were more likely to say they do not have much influence (16.7% of black respondents compared to 11.0% of white respondents). White respondents were more likely to feel that council members had no influence than were black respondents (4.9% of white respondents compared to 1.4% of black respondents).

Although 80% of each age group felt that council members had either a great deal or some influence over these decisions, the percentage of respondents who felt that council exerted a great deal of influence increased with age. Among those age 18 to 29, 35.3% shared this opinion. That percentage increased to 40.2% among those age 30 to 44, 42.9% of those age 45 to 64, and 49.2% for those age 65 and older. Respondents with some college (85.5%) or with a college degree (86.1%) were most likely to feel that council members had a great deal or some influence over growth and development decisions in their community compared to 79.8% of those with a high school diploma. Those with less than a high school diploma were most likely

to say that county council had no influence over growth and development decisions (12.1% compared to 3.8% of those with a high school diploma, 4.3% of those with some college, and 2.9% of those with a college degree). Table 2 provides a complete breakdown of the results based on demographic characteristics.

### **Influence of State Representative or Senator**

When asked about the influence of the state representative or senator, only education was statistically significant. The percentage of respondents who felt that the state representative or senator had either a great deal or some influence increased with the level of education. Less than 70% (69.0%) of those with less than a high school diploma shared this opinion compared to 79.9% of those with a high school diploma, 92.8% of those with some college, and 85.1% of those with a college degree. Table 3 provides an overview of the results for this question based on demographic characteristics.

TABLE 2  
INFLUENCE OF COUNCIL MEMBERS  
BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

	<u>Great deal</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Not much</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>N</u>
TOTAL	40.5	42.7	12.6	4.2	792
<u>SEX</u>					
Male	<b>41.6</b>	<b>38.2</b>	<b>16.0</b>	<b>4.2</b>	382
Female	<b>39.5</b>	<b>46.8</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>4.1</b>	410
<u>RACE</u>					
Black	<b>45.0</b>	<b>36.8</b>	<b>16.7</b>	<b>1.4</b>	209
White	<b>39.7</b>	<b>44.3</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>4.9</b>	546
<u>AGE</u>					
18 – 29	<b>35.2</b>	<b>44.1</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>6.1</b>	179
30 – 44	<b>40.2</b>	<b>46.6</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>2.1</b>	234
45 – 64	<b>42.9</b>	<b>41.2</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>5.2</b>	233
65 and Over	<b>49.2</b>	<b>31.7</b>	<b>16.7</b>	<b>2.5</b>	120
<u>EDUCATION</u>					
Less than High School	<b>43.9</b>	<b>28.8</b>	<b>15.2</b>	<b>12.1</b>	66
High School Diploma	<b>34.7</b>	<b>45.1</b>	<b>16.4</b>	<b>3.8</b>	213
Some College	<b>44.9</b>	<b>40.6</b>	<b>10.3</b>	<b>4.3</b>	234
College Degree	<b>41.4</b>	<b>44.7</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>2.9</b>	273
<u>INCOME</u>					
Under \$25,000	36.3	46.6	11.6	5.5	146
\$25,000 - \$49,999	42.4	45.5	9.4	2.6	191
\$50,000 - \$74,999	40.3	45.7	10.1	3.9	129
\$75,000 and Over	43.5	37.8	13.9	4.8	209
<u>TYPE OF AREA</u>					
Urban	37.6	44.1	15.1	3.2	186
Suburban	42.2	43.3	10.7	3.8	289
Rural	40.8	41.5	12.5	5.1	311
<u>REGION</u>					
Upstate	38.8	44.7	12.7	3.8	338
Midlands	38.5	43.8	12.4	5.3	226
Lowcountry	44.6	38.8	12.9	3.6	224

*Significant differences among subgroups are in bold.*

TABLE 3

INFLUENCE OF STATE REPRESENTATIVE OR SENATOR  
BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

	<u>Great deal</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Not much</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>N</u>
TOTAL	48.3	33.4	13.2	5.0	806
<u>SEX</u>					
Male	48.5	30.5	15.9	5.1	390
Female	48.3	36.2	10.6	4.8	414
<u>RACE</u>					
Black	51.4	29.0	15.9	3.7	214
White	47.8	34.9	12.1	5.2	556
<u>AGE</u>					
18 – 29	45.9	30.4	17.1	6.6	181
30 – 44	53.2	30.9	13.3	2.6	233
45 – 64	48.5	35.1	9.6	6.7	239
65 and Over	44.8	35.2	16.8	3.2	125
<u>EDUCATION</u>					
Less than High School	<b>49.3</b>	<b>19.7</b>	<b>19.7</b>	<b>11.3</b>	71
High School Diploma	<b>48.4</b>	<b>31.5</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>5.6</b>	213
Some College	<b>46.2</b>	<b>36.6</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>5.9</b>	238
College Degree	<b>49.5</b>	<b>35.6</b>	<b>12.7</b>	<b>2.2</b>	275
<u>INCOME</u>					
Under \$25,000	50.7	25.7	15.3	8.3	144
\$25,000 - \$49,999	47.7	34.2	13.5	4.7	193
\$50,000 - \$74,999	53.4	34.4	9.9	2.3	131
\$75,000 and Over	43.1	38.9	15.2	2.8	211
<u>TYPE OF AREA</u>					
Urban	48.4	32.8	15.1	3.6	192
Suburban	49.3	34.6	11.6	4.5	292
Rural	47.1	33.0	13.8	6.1	312
<u>REGION</u>					
Upstate	45.9	36.0	12.5	5.5	344
Midlands	52.4	32.2	11.9	3.5	227
Lowcountry	48.7	30.4	15.2	5.7	230

*Significant differences among subgroups are in bold.*

## **Influence of Individual Developers**

Respondents were next asked the amount of influence that individual developers had in community growth and development decisions. There were several significant differences based on the demographic characteristics. Male respondents (33.4%) were more likely to say that individual developers had a great deal of influence than were female respondents (24.9%). Female respondents were more likely to respond that individual developers had some influence (54.3%) compared to male respondents (42.7%). Black respondents were more likely to respond that individual developers had either a great deal or some influence (83.1%) compared to white respondents (75.9%). White respondents were more likely to respond that the individual developers had either not much (18.6%) or no influence (5.6%) than were black respondents (15.0% a great deal and 1.9% none). Among age groups, those age 18 to 29 were least likely to respond that individual developers has a great deal of influence (19.2% compared to 33.2% of those age 30 to 44, and 31.1% for both those age 45 to 64 and 65 and older). Seven in ten respondents with less than a high school diploma (70.0%) or with a high school diploma (73.7%) responded that individual developers had either a great deal or some influence compared to eight in ten of those with some college (81.7%) or a college degree (79.2%). Those with less than a high school diploma were most likely to feel that individual developers had no influence (14.3% compared to 4.1% of those with a high school diploma, 3.0% with some college, and 3.7% of those with a college degree). Within type of area, respondents in urban areas (83.7%) were most likely to feel that individual developers had either a great deal or some influence. Among respondents in suburban areas, this percentage was 78.4% and among respondents in rural areas

the percentage was 73.8%. Table 4 provides the complete results for each of the demographic variables.

TABLE 4  
INFLUENCE OF INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPERS  
BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

	<u>Great deal</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Not much</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>N</u>
TOTAL	29.0	48.8	17.8	4.4	803
<u>SEX</u>					
Male	<b>33.4</b>	<b>42.7</b>	<b>18.4</b>	<b>5.4</b>	386
Female	<b>24.9</b>	<b>54.3</b>	<b>17.2</b>	<b>3.6</b>	418
<u>RACE</u>					
Black	<b>32.4</b>	<b>50.7</b>	<b>15.0</b>	<b>1.9</b>	213
White	<b>27.4</b>	<b>48.5</b>	<b>18.6</b>	<b>5.6</b>	555
<u>AGE</u>					
18 – 29	<b>19.2</b>	<b>52.5</b>	<b>24.9</b>	<b>3.4</b>	177
30 – 44	<b>33.2</b>	<b>47.1</b>	<b>16.4</b>	<b>3.4</b>	238
45 – 64	<b>31.1</b>	<b>49.4</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>5.0</b>	241
65 and Over	<b>31.1</b>	<b>45.9</b>	<b>17.2</b>	<b>5.7</b>	122
<u>EDUCATION</u>					
Less than High School	<b>28.6</b>	<b>41.4</b>	<b>15.7</b>	<b>14.3</b>	70
High School Diploma	<b>26.7</b>	<b>47.0</b>	<b>22.1</b>	<b>4.1</b>	217
Some College	<b>27.5</b>	<b>54.2</b>	<b>15.3</b>	<b>3.0</b>	236
College Degree	<b>31.9</b>	<b>47.3</b>	<b>17.2</b>	<b>3.7</b>	273
<u>INCOME</u>					
Under \$25,000	24.7	51.4	17.1	6.8	146
\$25,000 - \$49,999	29.0	48.2	18.7	4.1	193
\$50,000 - \$74,999	27.7	53.8	12.3	6.2	130
\$75,000 and Over	35.7	45.2	15.7	3.3	210
<u>TYPE OF AREA</u>					
Urban	<b>32.6</b>	<b>51.1</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>3.2</b>	190
Suburban	<b>23.1</b>	<b>55.3</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>5.8</b>	295
Rural	<b>32.3</b>	<b>41.5</b>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>4.2</b>	313
<u>REGION</u>					
Upstate	25.7	47.6	22.2	4.4	338
Midlands	32.3	50.2	13.1	4.4	229
Lowcountry	30.0	49.8	15.5	4.7	233

*Significant differences among subgroups are in bold.*

### **Influence of Professional Organizations**

When asked the amount of influence that professional organizations had in community growth and development decisions, only among educational groups were there significant differences. The percentage of respondents who report that professional organizations have a great deal of influence decreased with education. Among respondents with less than a high school diploma, 44.8% share this opinion compared with 32.1% of those with a high school diploma, 32.3% of those with some college, and 26.5% of those with a college degree. Respondents with a college degree were most likely to respond that professional organizations did not have much influence (21.5%) compared to 16.4% of those with less than a high school diploma, 18.8% of those with a high school diploma, and 8.9% of those with some college. Table 5 provides the complete breakdown by demographic variables.

### **Influence of the Chamber of Commerce**

There were no statistically significant differences among demographic groups when asked about the influence of the Chamber of Commerce (see Table 6).

### **Influence of County Administration and Staff**

Differences based on both age and education were significant when respondents were asked about the influence of county administration and staff. Respondents age 18 to 29 were least likely to report that county administration and staff had a great deal of influence (29.4%) compared to almost 40% of those between 30 and 44 (39.0%), those age 45 to 64 (38.7%) and those 65 and over (37.6%). One in four (25.4%) respondents age 18 to 29 indicated that county



administration and staff had not much influence over community growth and development decisions compared 14.3% of those age 30 to 44, 13.2% of those age 45 to 64, and 12.0% of those age 65 and older. Among education groups, those with less than a high school diploma were least likely to respond that county administration and staff had either a great deal or some influence (63.6%) compared to 76.3% of those with a high school diploma, 83.4% of those with some college, and 83.5% of those with a college degree. Those with less than a high school diploma were also significantly more likely to report that county administration and staff had no influence (12.1%) compared to 1.9% of those with a high school diploma, 4.3% of those with some college, and 3.7% of those with a college degree. Table 7 provides the complete results for each demographic group.

TABLE 5  
INFLUENCE OF PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS  
BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

	<u>Great deal</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Not much</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>N</u>
TOTAL	31.3	46.9	16.8	5.1	803
<u>SEX</u>					
Male	32.3	46.9	15.9	4.9	384
Female	30.1	47.0	17.4	5.5	419
<u>RACE</u>					
Black	32.4	46.6	16.0	5.0	219
White	30.7	47.3	16.8	5.1	547
<u>AGE</u>					
18 – 29	29.2	48.3	18.5	3.9	178
30 – 44	30.1	48.5	16.7	4.6	239
45 – 64	31.6	46.4	15.2	6.8	237
65 and Over	36.9	40.2	17.2	5.7	122
<u>EDUCATION</u>					
Less than High School	<b>44.8</b>	<b>35.8</b>	<b>16.4</b>	<b>3.0</b>	67
High School Diploma	<b>32.1</b>	<b>42.7</b>	<b>18.8</b>	<b>6.4</b>	218
Some College	<b>32.3</b>	<b>52.3</b>	<b>8.9</b>	<b>6.4</b>	235
College Degree	<b>26.5</b>	<b>48.4</b>	<b>21.5</b>	<b>3.6</b>	275
<u>INCOME</u>					
Under \$25,000	35.0	41.3	16.8	7.0	143
\$25,000 - \$49,999	35.1	45.4	13.4	6.2	194
\$50,000 - \$74,999	26.7	51.9	14.5	6.9	131
\$75,000 and Over	28.9	49.3	18.5	3.3	211
<u>TYPE OF AREA</u>					
Urban	30.6	48.7	16.1	4.7	193
Suburban	31.4	47.8	16.4	4.4	293
Rural	31.5	44.4	17.7	6.4	311
<u>REGION</u>					
Upstate	27.0	50.1	16.9	5.9	337
Midlands	34.1	44.8	16.4	4.7	232
Lowcountry	35.5	44.6	15.6	4.3	231

*Significant differences among subgroups are in bold.*

TABLE 6  
INFLUENCE OF CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

	<u>Great deal</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Not much</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>N</u>
TOTAL	30.8	49.9	14.8	4.6	768
<u>SEX</u>					
Male	29.4	49.1	16.4	5.1	371
Female	32.0	50.6	13.4	4.0	397
<u>RACE</u>					
Black	32.4	46.9	16.9	3.9	207
White	30.2	51.3	14.1	4.4	524
<u>AGE</u>					
18 – 29	29.4	48.8	19.4	2.4	170
30 – 44	36.1	49.1	10.9	3.9	230
45 – 64	26.2	51.1	15.7	7.0	229
65 and Over	33.3	49.1	14.0	3.5	114
<u>EDUCATION</u>					
Less than High School	26.9	40.3	20.9	11.9	67
High School Diploma	28.8	52.5	14.6	4.0	198
Some College	32.6	50.0	12.2	5.2	230
College Degree	31.8	50.2	15.7	2.2	267
<u>INCOME</u>					
Under \$25,000	36.0	44.9	11.8	7.4	136
\$25,000 - \$49,999	28.9	54.0	13.4	3.7	187
\$50,000 - \$74,999	29.0	57.3	11.3	2.4	124
\$75,000 and Over	34.1	45.9	15.6	4.4	205
<u>TYPE OF AREA</u>					
Urban	34.6	47.6	15.1	2.7	185
Suburban	31.7	51.1	13.4	3.9	284
Rural	27.6	49.8	16.4	6.1	293
<u>REGION</u>					
Upstate	31.7	49.8	15.0	3.4	319
Midlands	30.8	52.5	10.4	6.3	221
Lowcountry	29.6	47.5	18.8	4.0	223

*Significant differences among subgroups are in bold.*

TABLE 7  
INFLUENCE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF  
BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

	<u>Great deal</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Not much</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>N</u>
TOTAL	36.3	43.5	16.1	4.2	786
<u>SEX</u>					
Male	37.9	43.2	14.4	4.5	375
Female	34.9	43.7	17.6	3.9	410
<u>RACE</u>					
Black	42.0	36.8	17.5	3.8	212
White	34.1	46.7	15.3	3.9	542
<u>AGE</u>					
18 – 29	<b>29.4</b>	<b>43.5</b>	<b>25.4</b>	<b>1.7</b>	177
30 – 44	<b>39.0</b>	<b>43.7</b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>3.0</b>	231
45 – 64	<b>38.7</b>	<b>41.7</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>6.4</b>	235
65 and Over	<b>37.6</b>	<b>46.2</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>4.3</b>	117
<u>EDUCATION</u>					
Less than High School	<b>31.8</b>	<b>31.8</b>	<b>24.2</b>	<b>12.1</b>	66
High School Diploma	<b>34.1</b>	<b>42.2</b>	<b>21.8</b>	<b>1.9</b>	211
Some College	<b>40.4</b>	<b>43.0</b>	<b>12.3</b>	<b>4.3</b>	235
College Degree	<b>35.6</b>	<b>47.9</b>	<b>12.7</b>	<b>3.7</b>	267
<u>INCOME</u>					
Under \$25,000	38.4	35.6	20.5	5.5	146
\$25,000 - \$49,999	38.2	45.5	12.0	4.2	191
\$50,000 - \$74,999	37.8	42.5	16.5	3.1	127
\$75,000 and Over	38.2	41.1	16.9	3.9	207
<u>TYPE OF AREA</u>					
Urban	38.6	38.6	19.0	3.8	184
Suburban	34.1	45.3	16.7	3.8	287
Rural	37.0	45.5	13.3	4.2	308
<u>REGION</u>					
Upstate	36.6	43.5	16.8	3.0	333
Midlands	38.5	42.9	14.2	4.4	226
Lowcountry	33.3	44.6	16.7	5.4	222

*Significant differences among subgroups are in bold.*

## **Influence of Advisory Boards**

When respondents were asked the influence of advisory boards in making local growth and development decisions the majority (59.2%) responded that they have some influence. Identical percentages (17.8%) indicated that advisory board either had a great deal of influence or not much. Within the two younger age groups, slightly more than six in ten responded that advisory boards had some influence (65.9% among those age 18 to 29 and 62.5% among those age 30 to 44). Among those age 45 to 64, 52.0% responded that advisory boards had some influence as did 55.4% of those age 65 and over. Among education groups, those with less than a high school diploma were least likely to respond that advisory boards had some influence (45.3%) compared to 59.4% of those with a high school diploma, 58.4% of those with some college, and 63.5% of those with a college degree. Those with a high school diploma (26.6%) were most likely to say advisory boards had a great deal of influence while similar percentages of those with less than a high school diploma responded that these boards had a great deal of influence (21.9%) or not much influence (23.4%). Within type of area in which the respondent lived, those in rural areas were most likely to respond that advisory board had a great deal of influence (24.2%) compared to 16.9% of those in urban areas and 12.2% of those in suburban areas. Almost identical percentages of those living in urban areas (62.3%) or suburban areas (62.0%) responded that advisory boards had some influence compared to 54.0% of those living in rural areas. (See table 8).

TABLE 8  
INFLUENCE OF ADVISORY BOARDS  
BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

	<u>Great deal</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Not much</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>N</u>
TOTAL	17.8	59.2	17.8	5.2	743
<u>SEX</u>					
Male	17.3	56.7	20.1	5.9	358
Female	18.2	61.6	15.6	4.7	385
<u>RACE</u>					
Black	19.2	57.7	16.8	6.3	208
White	17.6	59.6	18.4	4.4	505
<u>AGE</u>					
18 – 29	<b>15.9</b>	<b>65.9</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>4.7</b>	170
30 – 44	<b>17.4</b>	<b>62.5</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>2.7</b>	224
45 – 64	<b>19.6</b>	<b>52.0</b>	<b>19.6</b>	<b>8.9</b>	225
65 and Over	<b>19.8</b>	<b>55.4</b>	<b>21.8</b>	<b>3.0</b>	101
<u>EDUCATION</u>					
Less than High School	<b>21.9</b>	<b>45.3</b>	<b>23.4</b>	<b>9.4</b>	64
High School Diploma	<b>26.6</b>	<b>59.4</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>3.1</b>	192
Some College	<b>14.2</b>	<b>58.4</b>	<b>19.9</b>	<b>7.5</b>	226
College Degree	<b>13.9</b>	<b>63.5</b>	<b>19.8</b>	<b>2.8</b>	252
<u>INCOME</u>					
Under \$25,000	18.8	58.7	15.2	7.2	138
\$25,000 - \$49,999	20.6	60.0	12.8	6.7	180
\$50,000 - \$74,999	14.9	62.0	21.5	1.7	121
\$75,000 and Over	18.5	56.0	20.0	5.5	200
<u>TYPE OF AREA</u>					
Urban	<b>16.9</b>	<b>62.3</b>	<b>16.9</b>	<b>3.8</b>	183
Suburban	<b>12.2</b>	<b>62.0</b>	<b>21.4</b>	<b>4.4</b>	271
Rural	<b>24.2</b>	<b>54.0</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>7.0</b>	285
<u>REGION</u>					
Upstate	15.5	58.9	20.4	5.2	309
Midlands	20.4	60.6	14.8	4.2	216
Lowcountry	18.7	57.9	17.3	6.1	214

*Significant differences among subgroups are in bold.*

## **Influence of Local Radio and Print Media**

Respondents were next asked about the influence that local radio and print media have in growth and development decisions in the community. Overall, 69.2% of respondents indicated that this group has either a great deal or some influence over these decisions. And, while at least 60% of each of the demographic subgroups reports this perception, there are significant differences among the groups. Female respondents (73.3%) are somewhat more likely to indicate that local radio and print media has either a great deal or some influence compared to 64.9% of male respondents. A higher percentage of female respondents (31.6%) responded that this group has a great deal of influence, only 23.6% of male respondents shared this perception. Male respondents are more likely to indicate that this group either has not much influence (24.6% for male respondents compared to 19.0% of female respondents) or no influence (10.5% of male respondents and 7.7% of female respondents).

Equal percentages of black respondents said that local radio and print media had a great deal of influence (37.3%) or some influence (36.4%), while white respondents were almost twice as likely to say that this group had some influence (43.6%) as to say it had a great deal of influence (24.2%). Two-thirds of respondents below the age of 65 (68.5% age 18 to 29, 67.4% age 30 to 44, and 68.8% age 45 to 64) responded that local radio and print media had either a great deal or some influence while three-fourths (74.8%) of those age 65 and older shared this opinion. The percentage of respondents who felt this group had a great deal of influence declined with education. Among respondents with less than a high school diploma, 41.7% shared this opinion compared to 35.8% of respondents with a high school diploma, 29.0% with some college, and 17.3% with a college degree. A similar pattern is seen with income groups

with the percentage who indicated that this group had a great deal of influence declining from 39.6% of those with an income under \$25,000, to 32.3% with an income between \$25,000 and \$49,999, 22.5% among respondents with an income between \$50,000 and \$74,999; and 17.6% of those with an income of \$75,000 and over. (See table 9).



TABLE 9  
INFLUENCE OF LOCAL RADIO AND PRINT MEDIA  
BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

	<u>Great deal</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Not much</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>N</u>
TOTAL	27.7	41.5	21.7	9.1	807
<u>SEX</u>					
Male	<b>23.6</b>	<b>41.3</b>	<b>24.6</b>	<b>10.5</b>	390
Female	<b>31.6</b>	<b>41.7</b>	<b>19.0</b>	<b>7.7</b>	415
<u>RACE</u>					
Black	<b>37.3</b>	<b>36.4</b>	<b>17.5</b>	<b>8.8</b>	217
White	<b>24.2</b>	<b>43.6</b>	<b>23.7</b>	<b>8.5</b>	553
<u>AGE</u>					
18 – 29	<b>30.9</b>	<b>37.6</b>	<b>18.2</b>	<b>13.3</b>	181
30 – 44	<b>31.4</b>	<b>36.0</b>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>10.6</b>	236
45 – 64	<b>23.5</b>	<b>45.3</b>	<b>25.5</b>	<b>5.8</b>	243
65 and Over	<b>27.7</b>	<b>47.1</b>	<b>20.2</b>	<b>5.0</b>	119
<u>EDUCATION</u>					
Less than High School	<b>41.7</b>	<b>26.4</b>	<b>20.8</b>	<b>11.1</b>	72
High School Diploma	<b>35.8</b>	<b>35.3</b>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>6.9</b>	218
Some College	<b>29.0</b>	<b>44.5</b>	<b>20.2</b>	<b>6.3</b>	238
College Degree	<b>17.3</b>	<b>47.1</b>	<b>23.5</b>	<b>12.1</b>	272
<u>INCOME</u>					
Under \$25,000	<b>39.6</b>	<b>36.9</b>	<b>16.8</b>	<b>6.7</b>	149
\$25,000 - \$49,999	<b>32.3</b>	<b>40.1</b>	<b>17.7</b>	<b>9.9</b>	192
\$50,000 - \$74,999	<b>22.5</b>	<b>40.3</b>	<b>27.9</b>	<b>9.3</b>	129
\$75,000 and Over	<b>17.6</b>	<b>45.2</b>	<b>26.2</b>	<b>11.0</b>	210
<u>TYPE OF AREA</u>					
Urban	25.4	43.4	23.3	7.9	189
Suburban	29.2	43.0	17.8	10.1	298
Rural	28.3	38.7	24.8	8.3	315
<u>REGION</u>					
Upstate	26.8	38.9	24.5	9.7	339
Midlands	30.6	39.7	22.0	7.8	232
Lowcountry	26.4	46.3	17.7	9.5	231

*Significant differences among subgroups are in bold.*

## **Influence of Organized Citizen Groups**

Respondents were next asked the amount of influence that organized citizen groups had is local growth and development decisions. Overall, almost 50% (49.1%) indicated that these groups had some influence. One in four (25.1%) indicated that these groups did not have much influence. Black respondents were more likely to indicate that organized citizen groups had a great deal of influence, 25.2% for black respondents compared to 15.4% of white respondents. However, slightly more than one-half of the white respondents (50.7%) indicated these groups had some influence compared to 46.3% of black respondents.

Among education subgroups, respondents with less than a high school diploma were most likely to say that organized citizen groups had a great deal of influence (22.2% compared to 18.6% of those with a high school diploma, 19.7% of those with some college, and 15.9% or respondents with a college degree). However, respondents with less than a high school diploma were significantly more likely to say this group had no influence, 23.6%, while 7.9% of those with a high school diploma, and 5.5% of both respondents with some college or a college degree held the same opinion.

Across income groups, there are differences between respondents with an income under \$50,000 and those with an income over \$50,000. Similar percentages of respondents with an income under \$25,000 (23.0%) and those with an income between \$25,000 and \$49,999 (22.2%) responded that organized citizen groups had a great deal of influence. Among respondents with an income between \$50,000 and \$74,999, 12.3% shared this perception of influence as did 15.6% of those with an income of \$75,000 and over. Over one-half of respondents in these upper two income groups (52.3% of those with an income of between \$50,000 and \$74,999 and

55.0% of those with an income of \$75,000 and over) indicated that organized citizen groups had some influence compared to 41.2% of those with an income under \$25,000 and 45.5% with an income between \$25,000 and \$49,999. Respondents with an income under \$25,000 were most likely to say these groups had no influence (12.8% compared to 8.5% of respondents with an income between \$25,000 and \$49,999; 4.6% with an income between \$50,000 and \$74,999; and 5.2% whose income is \$75,000 and over), Table 10 contains a complete breakdown by demographic groups.

### **Influence of Individual Citizens**

Overall, 36.7% of respondents indicated that individual citizens did not have much influence over growth and development decisions in their community while 36.3% indicated that they had some influence. Only 16.9% felt that citizens had a great deal of influence and 10.2% said citizens had no influence in these decisions. Black respondents were most likely to say that individuals citizens had some influence (45.7% compared to 31.8% of white respondents) while white respondents were almost twice as likely to respond that individual citizens did not have much influence (43.3% of white respondents compared to 22.4% of black respondents). White respondents were also twice as likely to respond that individual citizens had no influence (12.0% of white respondents and 5.9% of black respondents).

Among education subgroups, over half the respondents with less than a high school diploma (58.1%); 54.6% of those with a high school diploma; and 57.1% of those with some college reported that individual citizens had either some or a great deal of influence while 53.8% of respondents with a college degree said that individual citizens had not much or no influence over these decisions. Across income groups, over one-half of respondents with an income of

under \$25,000 (62.0%) or with an income between \$25,000 and \$49,999 (53.9%) felt that individual citizens had either a great deal or some influence. Less than one-half of those with an income of between \$50,000 and \$74,999 (43.2%) or with an income of \$75,000 and over (45.7%) shared this opinion. The percentage of respondents who felt that individual citizens did not have much influence increased with income level: 26.0% of those with an income under \$25,000; 33.7% of those with an income between \$25,000 and \$49,999; 43.9% of those with an income between \$50,000 and \$74,000; and 46.2% of those with an income of \$75,000 and over.

When respondents are identified by type of area in which they live, 53.2% of those living in suburban areas reported that individual citizens have either not much or no influence on growth and development decisions in their community. Among urban respondents, 59.3% indicated that individual citizens had either some or a great deal of influence and 54.7% of respondents from rural areas shared this opinion. Table 11 provides a complete breakdown based on demographic characteristics.

TABLE 10  
INFLUENCE OF ORGANIZED CITIZEN GROUPS  
BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

	<u>Great deal</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Not much</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>N</u>
TOTAL	18.3	49.1	25.1	7.6	804
<u>SEX</u>					
Male	18.2	47.3	26.3	8.2	391
Female	18.4	50.7	23.9	7.0	414
<u>RACE</u>					
Black	<b>25.2</b>	<b>46.3</b>	<b>21.5</b>	<b>7.0</b>	214
White	<b>15.4</b>	<b>50.3</b>	<b>26.6</b>	<b>7.8</b>	553
<u>AGE</u>					
18 – 29	14.8	43.7	34.4	7.1	183
30 – 44	21.9	48.1	23.2	6.9	233
45 – 64	18.7	48.1	23.2	10.0	241
65 and Over	16.5	57.0	20.7	5.8	121
<u>EDUCATION</u>					
Less than High School	<b>22.2</b>	<b>33.3</b>	<b>20.8</b>	<b>23.6</b>	72
High School Diploma	<b>18.6</b>	<b>42.8</b>	<b>30.7</b>	<b>7.9</b>	215
Some College	<b>19.7</b>	<b>52.1</b>	<b>22.7</b>	<b>5.5</b>	238
College Degree	<b>15.9</b>	<b>54.6</b>	<b>24.0</b>	<b>5.5</b>	271
<u>INCOME</u>					
Under \$25,000	<b>23.0</b>	<b>41.2</b>	<b>23.0</b>	<b>12.8</b>	148
\$25,000 - \$49,999	<b>22.2</b>	<b>45.5</b>	<b>23.8</b>	<b>8.5</b>	189
\$50,000 - \$74,999	<b>12.3</b>	<b>52.3</b>	<b>30.8</b>	<b>4.6</b>	130
\$75,000 and Over	<b>15.6</b>	<b>55.0</b>	<b>24.2</b>	<b>5.2</b>	211
<u>TYPE OF AREA</u>					
Urban	18.5	48.7	28.6	4.2	189
Suburban	19.1	51.2	20.1	9.6	293
Rural	17.6	47.0	27.8	7.7	313
<u>REGION</u>					
Upstate	17.7	49.9	24.2	8.3	339
Midlands	16.2	50.0	27.6	6.1	228
Lowcountry	21.5	46.8	23.6	8.2	233

*Significant differences among subgroups are in bold.*

TABLE 11  
INFLUENCE OF INDIVIDUAL CITIZENS  
BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

	<u>Great deal</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Not much</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>N</u>
TOTAL	16.9	36.3	36.7	10.2	814
<u>SEX</u>					
Male	16.8	33.8	38.6	10.9	394
Female	16.9	38.8	34.8	9.5	420
<u>RACE</u>					
Black	<b>26.0</b>	<b>45.7</b>	<b>22.4</b>	<b>5.9</b>	219
White	<b>12.9</b>	<b>31.8</b>	<b>43.3</b>	<b>12.0</b>	559
<u>AGE</u>					
18 – 29	18.1	35.2	39.6	7.1	182
30 – 44	18.0	37.2	31.0	13.8	239
45 – 64	15.7	34.7	38.4	11.2	242
65 and Over	15.2	39.2	40.8	4.8	125
<u>EDUCATION</u>					
Less than High School	<b>21.6</b>	<b>36.5</b>	<b>23.0</b>	<b>18.9</b>	74
High School Diploma	<b>17.9</b>	<b>36.7</b>	<b>38.1</b>	<b>7.3</b>	218
Some College	<b>15.1</b>	<b>42.0</b>	<b>31.1</b>	<b>11.8</b>	238
College Degree	<b>15.9</b>	<b>30.3</b>	<b>44.8</b>	<b>9.0</b>	277
<u>INCOME</u>					
Under \$25,000	<b>22.0</b>	<b>40.0</b>	<b>26.0</b>	<b>12.0</b>	150
\$25,000 - \$49,999	<b>16.6</b>	<b>37.3</b>	<b>33.7</b>	<b>12.4</b>	193
\$50,000 - \$74,999	<b>10.6</b>	<b>32.6</b>	<b>43.9</b>	<b>12.9</b>	132
\$75,000 and Over	<b>13.2</b>	<b>32.5</b>	<b>46.2</b>	<b>8.0</b>	212
<u>TYPE OF AREA</u>					
Urban	<b>18.6</b>	<b>40.7</b>	<b>34.5</b>	<b>6.2</b>	194
Suburban	<b>12.8</b>	<b>34.0</b>	<b>41.1</b>	<b>12.1</b>	297
Rural	<b>19.5</b>	<b>35.2</b>	<b>34.3</b>	<b>11.0</b>	318
<u>REGION</u>					
Upstate	13.9	35.1	39.4	11.6	345
Midlands	21.2	39.0	31.6	8.2	231
Lowcountry	17.0	35.7	37.9	9.4	235

*Significant differences among subgroups are in bold.*

## Summary

When asked about the relative influence of these ten groups, a majority of all respondents reported that each group had at least some influence on growth and development issues in their community. When the percentage of respondents indicating that a group has a great deal of influence is compared with the percentage of respondents indicating that a group has some influence, only state representative or senator received this higher perception of influence. In each of the other nine groups, a higher percentage of respondents indicated that the group has some influence rather than a great deal of influence. This would suggest that among respondents to the fall 2008 survey, the state representative or senator was perceived as exerting the greatest influence over community growth and development decisions. The only other group that comes close to the overall perception that it has a great deal of influence was county council members, with 40.5% of respondents indicating this group has a great deal of influence and 42.7% responding that it has some influence.

The influence that individual citizens have is almost evenly split between a great deal or some influence (53.2%) and not much or no influence (46.9%). Nearly identical percentages of respondents reported that individual citizens had not much influence, or some influence over these decisions, 36.7% and 36.3% respectively. Slightly more than 10% (10.2%) of respondents indicated that individual citizens have no influence on growth and development decision in their community. The percentage of respondents who feel that individual citizens had not much or no influence is greatest among residents of suburban areas in which 53.2% shared this opinion. Nearly one in three respondents (32.7%) indicated that organized citizens groups had little or no influence. Three in ten respondents (30.8%) indicated that local radio and print media also had

either not much or no influence over these decisions. This would suggest that the individual citizen is perceived as having little or no influence over these decisions.

Overall, the perceived influence of these ten groups can be divided into three groups based on the percentage of respondents who indicated that a particular group had a great deal or not much influence. State representative or senator, county council, and county administration and staff were seen as having the most influence in growth and development decisions. Professional organizations, the Chamber of Commerce, individual developers, and advisory boards are the groups identified with some influence, and local radio and print media, organized citizen groups, and individual citizens are seen as having the least amount of influence over growth and development decisions in their community.



## **Appendix**

Note 1: Weighting Used in Analysis

Note 2: Counties Used in Regional Analyses

Field Version of Questionnaire

## **Note 1**

### **Weights Used in Analysis**

Several weighting variables for the South Carolina State Survey data have been created and added to each data file. The first is a weight to adjust for households that can be reached on more than one telephone number. This weight has been developed so that such households are not overrepresented in the sample. This weight should be applied to the data whenever households are the desired unit of analysis.

The second weighting variable adjusts for the fact that the sampling unit in the survey was the household rather than the individual respondent. It also adjusts for multiple telephone households. When the individual is the appropriate unit of analysis rather than the household, this weight should be used.

The third weighting variable makes additional adjustments to the individual weight for under representation of various demographic groups in the population due to either nonresponse or to the fact that certain households do not have a telephone. The degree of under representation is assessed by comparing the demographic data from the survey with population estimates provided by the U.S. Census Bureau. This weight should always be used to ensure that a representative sample for making estimates of the true population figures for South Carolina. It is standard in analyses for South Carolina State Survey clients, unless otherwise indicated.

## Note 2

### Counties Used in Regional Analyses

#### Upstate

Abbeville  
Anderson  
Cherokee  
Chester  
Fairfield  
Greenville  
Greenwood  
Lancaster  
Laurens  
Newberry  
Oconee  
Pickens  
Spartanburg  
Union  
York

#### Midlands

Aiken  
Allendale  
Bamberg  
Barnwell  
Calhoun  
Clarendon  
Chesterfield  
Darlington  
Edgefield  
Kershaw  
Lee  
Lexington  
Marlboro  
McCormick  
Orangeburg  
Richland  
Saluda  
Sumter

#### Lowcountry

Beaufort  
Berkeley  
Charleston  
Colleton  
Dillon  
Dorchester  
Florence  
Georgetown  
Hampton  
Horry  
Jasper  
Marion  
Williamsburg

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